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ABSTRACT

This hearing transcript presents statements regarding programs that facilitate involvement of marginal or absentee fathers in the upbringing of their children. Opening or prepared statements, reiterating the increase in paternal abandonment and its attendant social costs, are presented for Indiana Senator Dan Coats, Chair of the Subcommittee on Children and Families, North Carolina Senator Lauch Faircloth, and for Connecticut Senator Christopher Dodd. Statements and testimony are then presented from four administrators of programs intended to encourage greater paternal responsibility, including the president of the "Promise Keepers" initiative. These statements and testimony explore the detrimental effects of absent fathers, examine policy issues including paternal visitation rights and the cultural construct of marriage, and describe efforts of their various organizations to encourage paternal responsibility. A statement from the president of the Children's Rights Council, on certain policies that have contributed to the increase of absent fathers and changes that would encourage positive parenting, concludes the transcripts. (HTH)

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ENCOURAGING RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

EXAMINING INITIATIVES TO ENCOURGE RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD

MAY 23, 1996

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ENCOURAGING RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD

THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1996

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, OF THE
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room SD–430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Coats (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Coats and Faircloth.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR COATS

Senator COATS. Good morning. The subcommittee hearing on "Encouraging Responsible Fatherhood" will begin.

I want to welcome our witnesses, whom I will introduce in a moment.

Let me just say there was some confusion this morning about the hearing and the timing, as we got ourselves locked into a series of 34 consecutive votes on the Senate floor beginning yesterday; we only finished half of those, and there was some confusion about when we would begin voting this morning. There was some thought that we would begin at 10 o'clock, which would seriously impede the hearing. So we were attempting to make some adjustments to that, only then to find out that the voting would not begin until later. But there was a report in the Congressional Monitor that the hearing was postponed, and we have received a number of calls this morning from people asking when is it going to be rescheduled, and we said it is on. So that has affected the turnout a little bit.

This is an extraordinarily important hearing from my perspective, and I am very pleased that we have such distinguished panelists today.

Let me start by making a brief statement, and then we will turn to our panelists. I would like to start with the story of a young Indiana man who shared this story with us. He had volunteered to help teach his daughter's second-grade class. One day, early in that volunteer effort, a student climbed up on his lap and begin studying his face and then touched his fingers against the volunteer's face, feeling his whiskers. The little boy, when he felt the harshness of the whiskers, was shocked by the feel, and he asked the man if they hurt.

What the volunteer realized was that that was the first time in that second-grader's life that he had ever been close enough to an adult male to know what whiskers were and to understand that those were shaved every morning.

A generation of Americans is being raised without fathers. It is the commonplace crisis of American society. It affects every community, urban and rural, black, Hispanic, white. The number of children living only with their mothers grew from 8 million in 1960 to 23 million in 1995. By some estimates, nearly 60 percent of all children born in the 1990's will reside in a home where their fathers will be substantially absent or do not live. For the first time in our history, the average child can expect to live a significant portion of his or her life in a home without a father.

These statistics are the result of two unprecedented trends. Out-of-wedlock births have increased by 400 percent in the last three decades, and the divorce rate has jumped by over 250 percent in that same time span.

But the problem runs even deeper than that, because even in families where mom and dad are both present, children often see less of their fathers than they ever have in history. Parents today spend roughly 40 percent less time with their children than parents did a generation ago, and fewer than 25 percent of all children get as much as an hour per day of individual contact with their fathers.

Not long ago, the importance of fathers was a matter of debate in our country; but that debate is over because the suffering of children caused by absent and irresponsible fathers is so obvious and so overwhelming. One of our witnesses this morning, Dr. David Popenoe, has called it a disaster in the making, and the statistics back him up.

Children from single-parent families, 90 percent of which are headed by mothers, are more likely to commit crimes, abuse drugs, suffer from emotional and psychological problems, deliver children before marriage, do poorly in school, and commit suicide.

When young boys are deprived of a model of responsible male behavior, they become prone to violence and sexual aggression. Young girls in the same circumstance are more likely to have children out-of-wedlock. The tragic result, as a recent article put it, too often is boys with guns and girls with babies.

My colleague Senator Moynihan has argued that a society of unattached males "asks for and gets chaos." But the converse is also true. When the role of fathers is respected and restored, a neighborhood and a society becomes a better place to live. Dr. Wade Horn has commented that the least dangerous man in the most dangerous neighborhood is a man walking down the street, holding the hand of his child.

I do not want to in any way diminish the importance or minimize the contribution of the millions of single mothers who raise their children in hard circumstances. They are often examples of sacrifice and commitment, models of what a parent should be. Yet we must say something further. When men abandon their families, there are consequences that follow children for years, often for their entire lives.

The abandonment of children, particularly by fathers, is not simply a lifestyle choice; it is the most direct cause of suffering for children in our society—more than lead paint or hunger or failed schools. We have discovered through hard experience that fathers are not expendable.

So the question is what can be done. How can this trend be reversed? These are the questions we are asking today.

First, it is clear that Government has some role, although it is often misunderstood. We have tended to focus on economics to reduce the strain on families, but it is clearly not enough. In the booming economy of the eighties, the number of single-parent households increased by 40 percent. We have also focused on child support enforcement, and this is important. But the financial role of fathers is just one role among many, and it is clearly not as important to children as emotional support, love and discipline.

I do believe that Government policies should communicate a clear public preference for marriage and family on matters such as public housing, the tax code, family planning and divorce law. Rewarding intact families is not, as some argue, a form of discrimination; it is a form of self-preservation, and we need to be more creative in this effort.

Second, the business community has an important role in creating family-friendly and father-friendly workplaces. A good example is found at the Saturn automobile factory in Springhill, TN, where assembly-line workers are employed on alternative schedules. Once a month, these schedules give workers 5 days at home with their families.

Third, private, religious and nonprofit organizations are demonstrating how fathers can renew their commitments and how mentors can transform the lives of the fatherless. These efforts are proving that broken trust and attachment within families can be restored.

One of our witnesses today, Charles Ballard, runs a model grassroots organization that mentors young fathers and returns them to their families. Charles Ballard's success has been described by columnist William Raspberry as "the miracle cloning business."

Another outstanding example is found in Promise Keepers, which is reminding a broad audience of fathers about their moral duties of paternity. Promise Keepers president Randy Phillips is with us today, and the extraordinary growth of his organization is one of the most hopeful developments on these issues.

Starting tomorrow evening, there will be 60,000 men at RFK Stadium for a weekend of understanding and deepening their relationship to their God, to their lives, to their children, to their families, to their communities, and to their country.

All the institutions of our society—Government, business and nonprofits—must start to take our crisis of fatherhood seriously. But ultimately, the responsibilities of being a father are personal; they require a man to bend down and take a child's hand and listen to a child's voice. Nothing is more important. And for those who make the effort, nothing is more rewarding.

The NBA's Philadelphia 76ers made news this week by winning the top choice in the NBA draft. But there was something even more significant in that story. The team's general manager, Brad Greenberg, decided not to attend the league's draft lottery, missing a chance to talk about his team's success on national television. Instead, Brad Greenberg decided to stay home to celebrate his son Cory's 10th birthday—a decision encouraged by team owner Pat Croce.

The rest of America will forget this story almost immediately. I imagine that Cory will remember it for his entire life. It may even shape the kind of father that he becomes.

Our Nation needs to encourage responsible fatherhood because our children desperately need fathers who will love them without limit and without reservation. I would hope that today, we could explore some ways to restore that role.

Before I formally introduce our panel, I would like to turn to my friend and colleague from North Carolina, Senator Faircloth and ask if he has any opening remarks and thank him for being here with us this morning.

Senator Faircloth.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR FAIRCLOTH

Senator FAIRCLOTH. Thank you, Senator Coats, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank you, and I appreciate your holding the hearing. As you know, the issue related to personal responsibility and fatherhood has been of particular interest to me, particularly in the context of the welfare reform debate. I have long believed that welfare reform legislation which does not address out-of-wedlock childbearing is not welfare reform.

I was glad to see that President Clinton has come across to our way of thinking to a minor degree. We will not reduce out-of-wedlock births without encouraging formation of strong families; they simply go together.

I feel that the root cause of the welfare problem is out-of-wedlock births, which is fueling the expansion of the welfare problem.

Most children on AFDC, the main welfare program, are in single-parent families. The vast majority of single-parent families are headed by women, and more than half of the new welfare cases are due to mothers having children out-of-wedlock. This is the continuing root cause of the problem.

As I see it, the first duty of any government is to avoid harming the people it serves, but welfare policies, especially those since 1965, in the past 30 years, have broken the rules. In 1965, when the War on Poverty began, the out-of-wedlock birth rate was less than 7 percent. Today it is over 36 percent, and in some communities it is over 80 percent. And this is after we have spent somewhere around $5.5 trillion in the War on Poverty. We now have more poverty than we had when we started, and we have accelerated the out-of-wedlock birth rate from something below 7 percent to over 36 percent.

Truly, this is the Government harming the people it was intended to serve.

A welfare check will never truly replace a father, and we cheat both children and their parents with policies which encourage out-of-wedlock childbearing and which discourage the formation of strong, two-parent families. This is simply something we cannot do, and it is what we have done with over 5 trillion of our dollars.

I want to commend the chairman for his leadership on this issue, his strong and deeply-felt leadership, which being a personal friend, I know that he feels. And I thank the witnesses for being with us today, and I look forward to hearing their testimony.

Senator COATS. Thank you, Senator Faircloth.

I would like to submit for the record a statement by Senator Dodd, the ranking member on this committee, who could not be here this morning because of a schedule conflict.

[The prepared statement of Senator Dodd follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR DODD

Paternal abandonment has become the norm in our society. If illegitimacy and divorce statistics are combined a baby born today stands a roughly 50–50 chance of keeping his father. Roughly two-thirds of African-American children currently live in father absent homes, and the rate of father absence is growing fastest in the white community. Additionally, parents today spend less time with their children than they did a generation ago, even in two-parent families. The American family has disintegrated, and we all suffer for it.

More violent crime is committed by persons who grew up in single-parent households. Fatherless children are twice as likely to drop out of school. Almost 50 percent of children 3 to 17 years old who live without their biological father exhibit significant emotional and behavioral problems requiring psychiatric treatment, and many will become maladjusted adults. The major cause of America's high infant mortality rate is the high rate of young mothers giving birth outside of marriage. Almost 50 percent of single-mother families are poor. Fatherless children are more likely to bear their own children out of wedlock.

Just as we as a nation decided to "say no" to drugs, we can use that same strength to "say yes" to marriage, family, and responsible fatherhood!

First, the Federal Government should use every vehicle we have to encourage the institution of marriage. This can be done through our tax laws, housing laws, public education system, child support enforcement, and welfare reform.

Second, State governments must take the lead by making divorce less easy and quick, and, if dissolution of the marriage must occur, encourage fathers to contribute financially and emotionally to the development of their children.

Third, private industry can contribute by creating father-friendly workplace policies. And the media can contribute by delegitimizing out-of-wedlock births and divorce in Hollywood.

Finally, religious leaders and institutions can reinforce the value of marriage and parenthood through premarital education programs, counseling, and moral persuasion.

Fifty years ago as millions of fathers were conscripted into military service, the Nation worried how this separation of fathers from their children would have profoundly negative consequences for the children and society's well-being. Today, we witness the same separation without any greater good. Sadly, we do not worry, rather, we consider it almost normal.

If we as a nation do not face the crisis of paternal absence head on, so many of society's ills will plague us for years to come.

Senator COATS. I would also indicate that Senator DeWine, who is the Senator for Charles Ballard, sends his deep regrets. He talked to me personally and informed us that because he has to be involved in a markup in the Judiciary Committee, he cannot do

both at the same time, and the markup involves actual voting and writing of legislation. He regrets that, but he asked me to welcome you and to thank you for your good work.

I will now introduce our witnesses, and I will start by saying that we had intended to have a fifth witness, Lynn Swann, a former Hall of Fame football player from the Pittsburgh Steelers, and former president of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, with whom I served on that board and remain his friend. He had intended to be with us today, but his wife just delivered their first child. And as I was talking with Lynn, we commented on the irony of leaving wife and first child to come down here and testify on the responsibilities of fatherhood; so he made the right choice, and we excused him.

Wade Horn is a child psychologist, and he served in the Bush administration on the U.S. Commission for Children, Youth and Families. Dr. Horn currently serves as director of the National Fatherhood Initiative, a national research and education organization promoting responsible fatherhood.

David Popenoe is a Rutgers University sociologist. Dr. Popenoe is an associate dean for social and behavioral sciences and has written extensively on the topic of responsible fatherhood, including his new book, "Life Without Father."

Charles Ballard, whose nonprofit organization, The National Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Development, has been cited by many as a model institution for reuniting fathers with their families. Mr. Ballard's organization was founded in Cleveland, OH. We are very pleased to have him with us this morning.

Randy Phillips is the president of Promise Keepers, a national Christian ministry dedicated to encouraging men to be Godly influences in the world. Promise Keepers has sponsored 28 rallies for nearly 1.4 million men. Their next rally will be held, as I indicated earlier, here in Washington tomorrow and Saturday at RFK Stadium—I hope you do not mind my putting that plug in, although I hear it is sold out.

I thank our witnesses for taking the time to be here with us this morning. Let me just explain to you that I conduct hearings a little bit differently than most. I try to assemble one panel, and I ask members to give brief, summary opening statements—and I know a couple of you have brought video testimony, which we are more than happy to receive—and then I like to just open it up for discussion. I want you to feel free to not have to abide by the formalities of necessarily awaiting your turn to be called on in the questions and answers. I want Senator Faircloth and other members who may join us to feel free to jump in and say, "Now, wait a minute, you just said such-and-such, and that seems to contradict," or "How do you feel about what Dr. Horn said?"

The purpose of the hearing is to gain information, and I want to make it a good back-and-forth discussion, so let us try to keep it flexible.

Let us start with Dr. Horn and go down the line with opening statements. To the extent you wish to summarize those, that will leave us more time for discussion, and we will make sure your full statements are included in the record.

Dr. Horn, welcome.

STATEMENTS OF WADE F. HORN, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE, LANCASTER, PA; DAVID POPENOE, ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ; CHARLES A. BALLARD, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON, DC; AND RANDY T. PHILLIPS, PRESIDENT, PROMISE KEEPERS, BOULDER, CO

Mr. HORN. Thank you, and thank you for holding this hearing. I think it is the most critical topic that we are facing today in our Nation.

I am not sure you indicated my most important accomplishment and the reason why I am here and dedicated to this issue, which is that I am also the father of two daughters, and they serve as the motivation for me in terms of this issue.

Let me begin by saying that the data are quite clear. Father absence is now both unprecedented and a reality. The statistics do show that for the first time in our history, our Nation's children can expect to spend significant time in homes without their fathers.

It is also clear that father absence has consequences. Under almost every measure of child well-being we know, when children grow up without involved and committed fathers, they do worse. These data lead to an inescapable conclusion, which is that if we are ever to improve the well-being of children in America, we will first have to do something to reconnect men to the ideal of good and committed fatherhood and, in doing so, reverse what is now a three-decade-long slide toward what David Blinkenhorn calls "a fatherless America."

The question is how. I believe the problem is primarily a cultural one, and as such, much of the work that needs to be done is going to have to be done within the realm of the culture. Nonetheless, I think there are things that Government can do to help reinstate fatherhood as a national priority. Let me share seven ideas with you.

First, I think Government can be very helpful in increasing the public's awareness of how important fathers are to the well-being of their children and to our Nation. Public education is often a very necessary first step for generating the public will and the private will to do something about the problem. I think this hearing is a very important first step in that regard.

Second, welfare policies do need to be restructured to reward marriage and responsible fatherhood. The link between avoiding welfare dependency and having children within the context of two-parent families is now irrefutable, yet we have a welfare system which serves to work against the creation of two-parent families. For example, current AFDC rules stipulate that a woman cannot receive full benefits if she is living with the father of her children and the father has an employment record or works more than 100 hours per month. There are also instances in which rents in public housing will skyrocket should a single mother choose to marry.

The Federal Government should proceed with block-granting welfare programs and devolving the responsibility for these programs

to the States, so that the States can use that opportunity to encourage and not punish marriage.

I also think that States and the Federal Government should start to give preferences to married couple low-income families for certain supply-limited or limited supply welfare benefits. For example, when it comes to Section 8 housing or slots in Head Start, I would suggest that married couple low-income families should go to the head of the line and not be put to the back of the line. I also think that the Earned Income Tax Credit should be restructured to eliminate a marriage penalty which can be as high as $5,000 per year should two low wage earners choose to get married.

Third, divorce laws should clearly be reformed to make divorce less common. Although this is within the purview of State government and not the Federal Government, it seems to me that the States should do a couple of things. They should require that couples undergo instruction on the emotional impact of divorce on children prior to granting the divorce; they should reconsider no-fault divorce, particularly in cases where children are involved; and when divorce is granted, States should provide for a rebuttable presumption of joint custody, particularly in combination with joint or co-parenting plans.

Fourth, child support enforcement should be coupled with stronger enforcement of child visitation rights for noncustodial fathers. It seems that we tend to focus on what fathers contribute economically almost to the exclusion of what they contribute psychologically to the welfare of their children following the breakup of a marriage. If we focus more on keeping the father involved with the child, it seems to me the result is likely to be greater compliance with child support payments, not because of legal threats, but because they know they are now acting in the best interests of their children.

Fifth, prison programs should be implemented to encourage family connection and teach incarcerated fathers how to be better parents. It is generally thought that the two best predictors of whether prisoners will continue to commit more crime after they are released are religion and family; and although prisons routinely have religion programs, far fewer of them have programs to keep prisoners connected with their families, and those that do tend to concentrate on mothers, not on fathers. Yet 94 percent of the prison population in America today are men, and 90 percent of them are fathers. It seems that if we can help connect those men to their children while they are in prison and teach them more effective fathering skills, we have a better chance, once they are released, of keeping them away from crime.

Sixth, we should encourage the development of local fatherhood projects and mentoring programs for fatherless children. There are programs that work. Charles Ballard's program is certainly a model for the Nation in that regard. Although I do believe that these programs should occur in the private sector, the Federal Government can and should support the development of these programs through the implementation of creative tax incentives. In this regard, I am particularly impressed with the poverty tax credit notion contained within the chairman's Project for American Renewal legislation, introduced earlier this year.

Then, finally, I think we need to increase support for adoption of children born out-of-wedlock. Given the tragically shortsighted nature of many to reestablish sexual abstinence before marriage as a social standard, some children will unfortunately be fathered out-of-wedlock. When this happens, I think we should do more to encourage adoption, to allow that child to begin live and to live throughout his or her entire childhood in a two-parent, mother-father, married household. So I applaud recent legislation that would provide a $5,000 tax credit to offset the cost of adoptions, but I think it does not go far enough. I think the Federal Government should do more to support the reestablishment of a network of maternity homes so that single mothers who want to place their children in an adopted, two-parent home have a safe environment where they can go for support and encouragement during their pregnancy.

I think there is a lot that the public and private sector working together can do to reinstate responsible fatherhood is a national priority, but I will issue this warning: We do not have much time. Within about 10 years, the majority of children in America will be growing up in fatherless households. When that happens, the social and psychological forces that work to explain away and rationalize the consequences of father absence will simply overwhelm those voices who are trying to reestablish fatherhood as an important national priority.

Our children are depending upon us to act, and act we must, but we are running out of time.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COATS. Dr. Horn, thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Horn follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WADE F. HORN, PH.D., DIRECTOR, THE NATIONAL FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

My name is Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. I am a child psychologist and the director of the National Fatherhood Initiative, a organization whose mission is to restore responsible fatherhood as a national priority. Formerly, I served as Commissioner for Children, Youth and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and was a presidential appointee to the National Commission on Children. Perhaps most importantly, I am the father of two young daughters. I am very pleased to have been invited here today to discuss ways the government can help to reverse the growing problem of father absence in the lives of our Nation's children.

The Fact of Father Absence And Why It Is Important

The most disturbing social trend of our time is the dramatic increase in father absent families. In 1960, the total number of children in the United States living in father absent families was less than 8 million. Today, that number stands at *23 million*[1].

Nearly four out of ten children in America do not live in the same home as their father. By some estimates, this figure is likely to rise to 60 percent of children born in the 1990's[2]. For the first time in our history, the average child can expect to live a significant portion of his or her life in a home without a father.

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[1] Wade F. Horn, *Father Facts.* Lancaster, PA: the National Fatherhood Initiative, 1995.

[2] Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., and Andrew J. Cherlin, *Divided Families: What Happens to Children When Parents Part.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.

For nearly one million children each year, the pathway to a fatherless family is divorce[3]. The divorce rate nearly tripled from 1960 to 1980, before leveling off and declining slightly in the 1980's[4]. Today, 40 out of every 100 first marriages now end in divorce, compared to 16 out of every 100 first marriages in 1960. While this trend has been consistent in most of the industrialized countries, no other country has a higher divorce rate[5].

Perhaps even more disturbing than the extraordinarily high divorce rate is the increasing trend of "father flight"; men abandoning their children even before they are born. In 1960, about 5 percent of all births were out-of-wedlock. That number increased to 10.7 percent in 1970, 18.4 percent in 1980, ad 28 percent in 1990[6]. In the United States today, the number of children fathered out-of-wedlock each year surpasses the number of children whose parents divorce.

Africa-Americans are disproportionately affected by the problem of father absence. Sixty-two percent of Africa-American children live in father absent homes. But this is by no means a "black problem." The absolute number of father absent families is larger—ad the rate of father absence is growing the fastest—in the white community. Currently, over 13 million white children reside in father absent homes, compared to approximately 6.5 million African-America children[7].

Unfortunately, no State has been immune to the growing problem of father absence. Between 1980 and 1990, non-marital birth rates increased in every State of the Union[8]. During this time period, 10 States saw the rate of nonmarital births increase by over 60 percent. Furthermore, births to unmarried teenagers, the group most likely to become long-term welfare dependents, increased by 44 percent between 1985 ad 1992[9]. Overall, the percent of families with children headed by a single parent currently stands at 25.3 percent, the vast majority of which are father absent households[10].

The fact of increasing physical absence of fathers from their children's homes would not be so disturbing if, in fact, physically absent fathers continued to stay involved in the lives of their children. Unfortunately, research shows that physically absent fathers tend—over time—to also become psychologically absent. Forty percent of children in father absent homes have not seen their father at all during the previous year. Only one in six sees their father an average of once or more per week[11]. More than half of all children who don't live with their fathers have never been in their father's home[12]. Statistics on unwed fathers are also disturbing. Whereas 57 percent of unwed fathers consistently visit their children during the first 2 years of life, by the time their child reaches 7½ years of age, that percentage drops to less than 25 percent[13].

In addition to the physical absence of fathers from the home, it is also apparent that many physically present fathers are nonetheless psychologically absent from the lives of their children. Overall, parents today spend roughly 40 percent less time

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[3] U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, *Advance Report of Final Divorce Statistics, 1988. Monthly Vital Statistics Report. Vol. 19, 1991.*

[4] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1993.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993.

[5] National Commission on Children. *Just the Facts: A Summary of Recent Information on America's Children and Their Families.* Washington, DC, 1993.

[6] House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means. 1991 *Green Book.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991.

[7] U.S. Congress, Committee on Ways and Means. *1993 Green Book.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1993," by Arlene Saluter, *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics P20-478.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1994; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Diverse Living Arrangements of Children: Summer 1991," by Stacy Furukawa, *Current Population Reports: Household Economic Studies.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1994.

[8] Stephanie J. Ventura, Christine A. Bachrach, Laura Hill, Kellenn Kay, Pamela Holcomb, and Elisa Koff. "The Demography of Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing," in U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, *Report to Congress on Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing.* Washington, DC, 1995, September (DHHS Pub. No. (PHS) 95-1257), p. 105.

[9] *Kids Count Data Book: State Profiles of Child Well-Being.* Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1995, p. 125.

[10] *Kids Count Data Book: State Profiles of Child Well-Being.* Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1995, p. 125.

[11] Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., and Christine Winquist Nord, "Parenting Apart: Patterns of Child Rearing After Marital Disruption," *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* 1985, November, p. 896.

[12] Frank Furstenberg and Andrew Cherlin, *Divided Families: What Happens to Children When Parents Part.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.

[13] Robert Lerman and Theodora Ooms, *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple, 1993, p.45.

with their children than did parents a generation ago[14]. One study found that almost 20 percent of 6th through 12th graders had not had a good conversation lasting for at least 10 minutes with at least one of their parents in more than a month[15]. In regard to fathers, a 1992 Gallup poll found that 50 percent of all adults agreed that "fathers today spend less time with their children than their fathers did with them."[16]

The absence of fathers, whether physical or psychological, has profound consequences for children. Almost 75 percent of America children living in single-parent families will experience poverty before they turn 11-years-old, compared to only 20 percent of children in two-parent families[17]. Children who grow up absent their fathers are also more likely to fail at school or to drop out[18] experience behavioral or emotional problems requiring psychiatric treatment[19], engage in early sexual activity[20] and develop drug and alcohol problems[21].

Children growing up with absent fathers are especially likely to experience violence. Violent criminals are overwhelmingly males who grew up without fathers, including 60 percent of America's rapists[22], 72 percent of adolescent murderers[23], ad 70 percent of juveniles in state reform institutions[24]. Children who grow up without fathers are also three times more likely to commit suicide as adolescents[25] and to be victims of child abuse or neglect[26].

In light of these data, noted developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner recently concluded:

"Controlling for factors such as low income, children growing up in [father absent] households are at a greater risk for experiencing a variety of behavioral and educational problems, including extremes of hyperactivity and withdrawal; lack of attentiveness in the classroom; difficulty in deferring gratification; impaired academic achievement; school misbehavior; absenteeism; dropping out; involvement in socially alienated peer groups, and the so-called 'teenage syndrome' of behaviors that tend to hang together—smoking, drinking, early and frequent sexual experience, and in the more extreme cases, drugs, suicide, vandalism, violence, and criminal acts."[27]

Clearly, fatherlessness is not the sole cause of each of these social ills—but it certainly makes each one worse. If we are ever to improve the well-being of children in America, we will have to first reconnect men to the ideal of good ad responsible fatherhood ad, in so doing, reverse this three decade long slide toward a fatherless America.

Promoting Responsible and Committed Fatherhood

Creating a culture of committed and responsible fathers will, of course, not be easy. But if we want men to act like responsible fathers, we must once again value

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[14] John P. Robinson, *How Americans Use Time: A Social-Psychological Analysis of Everyday Behavior*. New York: Praeger, 1977, p. 70; see also John P. Robinson, "Caring for Kids," *American Demographics*, July, 1989, p. 52.

[15] Peter L. Benson, *The Troubled Journey: A Portrait of 6th-12th Grade Youth*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute, 1993, p. 84.

[16] ERR14 The Role of Fathers in America: Attitudes and Behavior. Gallup national random sample conducted for the National Center for Fathering, Shawnee Mission, KS, April 1992.

[17] National Commission on Children, *Just the Facts: A Summary of Recent Information on America's Children and Their Families*. Washington, DC, 1993.

[18] Debra Dawson, "Family Structure and Children's Well-Being: Data from the 1988 National Health Survey," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 53, 1991; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, Survey of Child Health. Washington, DC, 1993.

[19] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey. Hyattsville, MD, 1988.

[20] Irwin Garfinkel and Sara McLanahan, *Single Mothers and Their Children*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press, 1986; Susan Newcomer and J. Richard Udry, "Parental Marital Status Effects on Adolescent Sexual Behavior," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 1987, May, pp. 235-240.

[21] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, *Survey on Child Health*. Washington, DC, 1993.

[22] Nicholas Davidson, "Life Without Father," *Policy Review*, 1990.

[23] Dewey Cornell, et al., "Characteristics of Adolescents Charged with Homicide," *Behavioral Sciences and the Law/*, 1987, 5, pp. 11-23.

[24] M. Eileen Matlock, et al., "Family Correlates of Social Skills Deficits in Incarcerated and Nonincarcerated Adolescents, *Adolescence*, 1994, 29, pp. 119-130.

[25] Patricia L. McCall and Kenneth C. Land, "Trends in White Male Adolescent Young Adults and Elderly Suicide: Are There Common Underlying Structural Factors?" *Social Science Research*, 1994, 23, pp. 57-81; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, *Survey on Child Health*. Washington, DC, 1993.

[26] Catherine M. Malkin and Michael E. Lamb, "Child Maltreatment: A Test of Sociobiological Theory," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 1994, 25, pp. 121-130.

[27] Urie Bronfenbrenner, "What do Families do?" *Family Affairs*, 1991, Winter/Spring, pp. 1-6.

ad support responsible fatherhood. Every civic, religious, and governmental organization can make fatherhood a priority by offering fathers support and, where needed, training through workshops ad mentoring programs. Father-friendly work places in which employers encourage, and do not discourage, their father-employees to take time off to participate in school activities or take their child to the doctor should be promoted.

Government clearly has a role to play in a reinstatement of fatherhood as a national priority. Public policy is, after all, both a reflection ad shaper of our culture.

Unfortunately, in the area of fatherhood, government action has thus far largely been restricted to programs aimed at establishing paternity ad enforcing child support orders.

Stricter penalties for failure to comply with paternity establishment or child support orders, while trying to achieve a worthy public policy, indirectly contribute to may of the problems associated with the reduced role of fathers. The unfortunate message such programs reinforce is that the most important thing fathers do is provide economically for their children. While helping to ensure the economic viability of one's family is certainly important, good fathers also are engaged in their children's lives as nurturers, disciplinarians, teachers, ad moral instructors. If we want men to take on these important tasks of responsible fathering, we must give them a more compelling message about fatherhood than the image of getting tough on "deadbeat dads."

A father-friendly public policy would be guided by the following two goals: first, public policy must work to reverse the erosion of support for fatherhood in the popular culture, ad second, government must eliminate de facto punishments for responsible fatherhood in current law. Guided by these two principles, I recommend the following seven governmental actions to encourage responsible and committed fathering:

1. Increase public awareness about the importance of fatherhood through public education campaigns and effective use of the "bully pulpit".

While public education campaigns are frequently seen as "not doing something" about a particular problem, it is often a necessary first step for generating the public and private will to "do something." In fact, attitudinal change about a problem is frequently a necessary precursor to behavioral change. If you don't know there is a problem, why should you do anything about it?

There are numerous cases of successful efforts to change public attitudes ad behavior by raising the awareness around a particular issue. Drinking milk, reducing litter, and quitting smoking are all areas where public behavior has been affected by media campaigns to a greater degree than would have been accomplished by public policy changes alone. Promoting responsible fatherhood is certainly different from these examples. But if done creatively and targeted correctly, such a campaign could reach those men who are not presently involved in the lives of their children as well as enhancing the understanding of teenage boys and young men as to the meaning of responsible ad committed fatherhood.

In January, the Arizona Child Support Coordinating Council (ACSCC) launched a innovative public education campaign to heighten the awareness of the importance of fathers to the well-being of children. The overall purpose of the campaign is to increase the number of children "raised and supported by responsible parents (not taxpayers)."[28] The first phase of the Council's Public Education Campaign included the development and distribution of a series of public service announcements (PSA) designed to:

1. Raise taxpayer awareness of how they are supporting others' children;
2. Raise public awareness of the difference it makes for children to have the emotional and financial support of two parents; and
3. Target non-custodial parents, especially young unwed fathers, to inspire them to understand that responsible fatherhood is the highest expression of manhood.

The first of the three PSAs (co-sponsored by the ACSCC and the National Fatherhood Initiative and narrated by NFL Hall of Famer and ABC Sportscaster Frank Gifford) addresses the difference fathers can make in their children's lives if they make the time. The second informs the taxpaying public that everyone pays child support through tax dollars. The third encourages absent fathers to provide financial and emotional support to their children.

Virginia is also launching, with the support of the National Fatherhood Initiative, a state-wide fatherhood promotion campaign. As part of Governor Allen's Citizen Empowerment Initiative, the first phase of the fatherhood campaign involves heightening public awareness of the issue through a series of television, radio, and

[28] The Domestic Relations Division, Arizona Supreme Court, *DR Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Winter, 1995, p. 2.

print PSAs, and stimulating interest in the development of community-based programs to promote responsible fatherhood through a series of local fatherhood community forums. The state then intends to provide seed grants to support the launching of community-based efforts to encourage and support responsible fatherhood.

Political leaders should also make use of the "bully pulpit" to support responsible fatherhood. For example, special commendations could be issued to local schools that have high father participation in "back to school nights" or at PTA meetings. Political leaders can also lead by example by publicly placing the welfare of their own children high on their list of priorities. This could be done by volunteering time in their children's classrooms, displaying their children's and grandchildren's drawings on their office walls, and periodically bringing their children or grandchildren to work.

2. Restructure welfare policies to reward marriage and responsible fatherhood.

We know that 80 percent of unmarried women who have a child before finishing high school are living in poverty, whereas only 8 percent of women who finish school, marry, and have a baby after the age of 20 are poor[29]. The link between avoiding welfare dependency, finishing high school and having children within the context of the two parent family seems irrefutable. Yet, present social welfare policies often work against the creation and stability of two parent families.

The antipathy of the welfare system to two parent families and fathers dates back to the "man in the house" rules promulgated in the 1950's. At that time, there was increasing public sentiment that fathers who could not find work and whose families would otherwise go on ordinary relief, might do better by appearing to abandon their family so that their wives and children could get on AFDC (then called Aid to Dependent Children or ADC) with its better standards for relief. Consequently, in 1950 the ADC legislation was amended by the Notice to Law Enforcement Officials (NOLEO), requiring that public-assistance workers get information from mothers about deserting fathers and give this to the district attorney, who might seek financial support from the father by legal means. This quickly led to unannounced inspections of the home, even "midnight raids," to reassure officials that the mothers were, in fact, deserted and that no man was around the house.

Beginning in the 1960's, there have been attempts to extend the AFDC program to include situations in which both parents live in the home, but today only about 10 percent of all families receiving AFDC have both a mother and a father in the home. Welfare rules continue to discourage, rather than encourage, family formation and the presence of a father in the home. For example, current federal AFDC rules prevent a woman from receiving full benefits if the father is at home and has an employment record or works more than 100 hours a month. There are also instances where rents in public housing authorities increase, sometimes substantially, should a single mother choose to marry.

To increase support for responsible fatherhood and decrease the perverse incentives for single-parenting, the Federal Government should proceed with block granting of welfare programs and devolving responsibility for this programs to the states. The states should then use the opportunity afforded by welfare block grants to encourage, and not punish, marriage.

This means, in part, allowing substantially higher earnings and asset disregards for low-income, married couples than for single-parent households. It also means relaxing the 30-day waiting period and provisions barring eligibility when the primary wage earner is working over 100 hours a month.

Other welfare programs should also be examined to ensure that they do not discriminate against married couples. For example, rather than giving preference to single-parent households, Section 8 housing should provide a preference for married couples. In addition, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) should be restructured to eliminate a strong marriage disincentive. Currently, a low-income couple can face a financial penalty of up to $5,000 a year should they marry. This EITC marriage penalty could be significantly reduced or eliminated by establishing different tax schedules for married parents and heads of households.

3. Reform divorce laws to make divorce less common and to give the needs of the children equal priority to those of the divorcing parents.

Nearly one million children each year experience the divorce of their parents. The magnitude of this number makes it clear that if we are ever to achieve a future in which the vast majority of children will grow up with both a mother and a father, something must be done to make divorce less common.

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[29] William Galston, "Beyond the Murphy Brown Debate: Ideas for Family Policy," remarks given at the Family Policy Symposium sponsored by the Institute for American Values, New York, NY, December 10, 1993.

There are at least four things government—in this case state government—can do to reduce the prevalence of divorce and give the needs of children equal priority to those of parents. First, states can heighten awareness of the negative consequences divorce has on children by passing legislation requiring that couples undergo instruction on the emotional impact of divorce on children prior to granting a divorce. In Columbus, Ohio, for example, all parents filing for divorce or separation are required to attend such a class within 45 days—or else the divorce is not approved. Similar programs are now in effect in Connecticut and Florida as well.

Such instruction is likely to both decrease the number of divorces (as parents learn of the possible negative impact of divorce on their children) and instill a deeper understanding of the need to better manage their own conflict for the sake of their children, should the couple decide to go forward with the divorce. In fact, such an instructional program operating in suburban Atlanta has already reduced in-court custody litigation—which is often devastating for children and costly for the courts—by 60 percent.

Second, state legislation should require that some evidence be presented that a couple has tried to reconcile their marital problems before a divorce is granted. The truth is that many troubled marriages can be saved. Programs such as Marriage Encounter and Retrouvaille have demonstrated that up to 80 percent of troubled marriages—including separated and even already divorced couples—can be revived[30]. Divorcing couples,especially when children are involved, ought to demonstrate that they have at least made a good faith effort to save their marriage.

Third, there is growing evidence that no-fault divorce laws are at least partly responsible for our high divorce rate. Changing no-fault divorce statutes, at least when children are involved, to again require "cause" could significantly decrease the prevalence of divorce. In considering this option, however, care should be taken not to make divorce so difficult to obtain that some spouses become trapped in abusive relationships.

Finally, to ensure that the couple understands they are divorcing each other, not the children, and to increase the probability that both parents will stay actively involved in their children's lives after the divorce is finalized, states should provide for a rebuttable presumption of joint custody when a divorce is granted. Indeed, there is evidence indicating that fathers with joint custody, compared to fathers without joint custody, are more likely both to stay in contact with their children[31] and to pay child support[32]. There is also evidence that joint custody results in decreased relitigation compared to sole maternal custody[33]. Of course there are times when the child's well-being necessitates alternative custody arrangements, but the presumption should be that until proven otherwise, children do best after divorce when they have continued contact with both parents.

4. Couple child support enforcement with stronger enforcement of child visitation rights for non-custodial fathers.

Most states have made tremendous progress in increasing the percentage of legally owed child support payments that are actually paid. But despite advances in child support enforcement, the evidence is overwhelming that when couples divorce, fathers frequently lose contact with their children. One reason for this is the message many courts give to men that the most important thing they can do following divorce is to send money. Indeed, divorced fathers are often made to feel like they have to pay a fee in order to see their children.

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[30] Michael J. McManus, *Marriage Savers: Helping Your Family and Friends Stay Married*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, p. 281.

[31] See for example C.R. Albiston, E.E. Maccoby, & R.R. Mnookin, "Does Joint Legal Custody Matter?" *Stanford Law and Policy Review*, 2, 1990, pp. 167-179; J.A. Arditti, "Factors Related to Custody, Visitation, and Child Support for Divorced Fathers: An Exploratory Analysis," *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 17, 1992, pp. 23-42; and C.M. Buchanan, E.E. Maccoby, & S.M. Dornbush, "Caught Between Parents: Adolescent Experiences in Divorced Homes," *Child Development*, 62, 1991, pp. 1008-1029.

[32] See for example J.A. Arditti, "Differences Between Fathers with Joint Custody and Noncustodial Fathers," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 62, 1992, pp. 186-195; R.E. Emery, S.G. Matthews, & M.M. Wyer, "Child Custody Mediation and Litigation: Further Evidence on the Differing Views of Mothers and Fathers," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 59, 1991, pp. 410-418; and D.K. Shriner, S.K. Simring, & E.T. Shapiro, "Level of Satisfaction of Fathers and Mothers with Joint or Sole Custody Arrangements: Results of a Questionnaire," *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 16, 1991, pp. 163-170.

[33] See for example J. R. Dudley, "The Consequences of Divorce Proceedings for Divorced Fathers," *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 16, 1991, pp. 171-193; R. E. Emery, & M.M. Wyer, "Child Custody Mediation and Litigation: An Experimental Evaluation of the Experience of Parents," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 55, 1987, pp. 179-186; D.A. Luepnitz, "A Comparison of Maternal, Paternal, and Joint Custody: Understanding the Varieties of Post-Divorce Family Life," *Journal of Divorce*, 9, 1986, pp. 1-12.

Certainly the financial support of one's children is important. Any man who is capable of providing financially for his children, yet does not, is not being a responsible father. But the courts must come to *understand that being a good father is* not just about money; it's about spending time with one's children and being involved in their lives. Judges can demonstrate this understanding by making the issue of continued involvement of both parents in the lives of the children the first issue to be resolved in any divorce proceeding, not the last, and by aggressively enforcing the visitation rights of non-custodial parents.

It is possible to strongly enforce child support orders and keep both parents involved in the lives of their children. More aggressive techniques to recover child support payments do not have to result in fathers choosing to become less involved with their children—though that frequently is the result. By working to aggressively keep non-custodial fathers involved with their children, the result could be greater compliance with child support payments, not because of legal threats, but because they know they are acting m the best interest of their child.

5. Implement prison programs to encourage family connections and teach incarcerated fathers how to be better parents.

It is generally thought that the two best predictors of whether prisoners will continue to commit more crimes after they are released are religion and family. Prisons routinely have religion programs available to their incarcerated population. Far fewer, however, have aggressive family outreach programs.

Family-friendly prison policies that do exist are primarily aimed at keeping female prisoners connected with their children; little attention has been paid to keeping the male prisoner connected with his children. Yet, 94 percent of the prisoners in the United States are men, and one study estimates that 88 percent[34] of them are fathers. Implementing father outreach programs for male prisoners may help to lower recidivism rates due to an increased desire to take care of and be involved in the lives of his children.

Isat least one child.

6. Encourage the development of local fatherhood projects and mentoring programs for fatherless children.

There are examples of local fatherhood programs that work. One successful model is that of Charles Ballard, director of the Center for Responsible Fatherhood in Cleveland. Mr. Ballard's project, which targets urban young men, helps participants to get and stay involved in the lives of their children, and support the mother of their children. His success is based upon his insistence that the first step in working with unwed fathers is to help them become attached to their children, which then motivates them both to declare their paternity for the child and to support their child financially and emotionally.

Another innovative model for supporting the work of fathers is "Boot Camp for New Dads" in Irvine, CA. This program is conducted in hospitals, and utilizes new fathers as mentors for expectant fathers. The goal is to improve the skills of fathers at the point when they are most interested in acquiring information and new skills—when they are anticipating becoming a father.

While encouraging the development of programs that support fathers, we must not forget the importance of also supporting children who are growing up in father absent households. Among the most important effects of such a mentoring relationship is helping boys understand what it means to be a responsible man and helping girls understand what they should expect from men.

When fatherless children grow up in communities where fatherlessness is the exception, we can afford to leave the development of mentoring relationships to chance for there will be numerous models for the child to emulate. But when fatherlessness is not the exception but the rule—as is the case in far too many communities today—the pairing of long-term mentors with fatherless children requires a more planful process. I am not suggesting that mentoring become "regulated;" only that in areas of high fatherlessness, civic and religious organizations need to develop outreach mechanisms for ensuring that fatherless children are exposed to responsible male mentors.

The development of father support and male mentoring programs should occur in the private sector. Nonetheless, the federal government can, and should, support the development of such programs through the implementation of creative tax incentives. I am particularly impressed with the poverty tax credit contained within the Chairman's Project for American Renewal legislation introduced in the Senate earlier this year. Such an approach would allow American taxpayers to reallocate their

[34] "Governors' Bulletin", December 11, 1995, published by the National Governors' Association, of the 36,000 inmates incarcerated in Georgia state prisons, 88 percent has

share of taxpayer dollars to private programs, including father support and male mentoring programs.

7. Increase support for the adoption of children born out-of wedlock.

Given the tragically shortsighted reluctance by many to reestablish sexual abstinence before marriage as a social standard, some children will, unfortunately, be fathered out-of-wedlock. When this happens, it is highly unlikely the father will stay in the picture for very long. In order to ensure that more children born out-of-wedlock have the benefit of both a mother and a father throughout their childhood, more needs to be done to encourage adoption.

Numerous studies indicate that children growing up in two-parent, adoptive families do about as well as children growing up in intact, two-parent families, and are far better off than children growing up in either single-parent or step-parent families. Yet, less than 3 percent of out-of-wedlock pregnancies result in adoption, despite the fact that public opinion polls show this to be a more attractive option in the case of an out-of-wedlock pregnancy than either abortion or single parenting.

Being father-friendly means being adoption-friendly. Thus, I applaud and support recent legislation that would provide a $5,000 tax credit to offset the costs of adoption. I also believe that the Federal Government ought to provide more support for maternity homes, so that single mothers who want to place their child in an adoptive two-parent home have a safe environment to which they can go for support and encouragement during their pregnancy.

Conclusion

In the end, most of what government can—and should—do will mostly effect the margins. Cultural problems demand cultural solutions. Government legislation and regulation, although not unimportant, pale in comparison to what the culture can and must accomplish. As Richard Louv as stated:

"Men will not move back into the family until our culture reconnects masculinity and fatherhood, until men come to see fathering—not just paternity—as the fullest expression of manhood.[35]"

But we don't have much time. Soon—very soon—the majority of America's children will be growing up in homes without their fathers. When this happens, the social and psychological forces rationalizing away the consequences of father absence will be larger and more vocal than those trying to reinstate responsible and committed fathering. Our children are depending upon us to act. But we are running out of time.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide you with this testimony. I will be pleased to answer any questions you might have concerning my testimony.

WADE HORN, Director, The National Fatherhood Initiative

Wade is a child psychologist, and he served as a U.S. Commissioner for Children, Youth and Families in the Bush administration. Through the National Fatherhood Initiative (a non-partisan organization that includes Don Eberly and David Blankenhorn), Wade has written and spoken extensively on the issue of responsible fatherhood.

***"FATHER FACTS"* by Wade Horn**

- "The data lead to the inescapable conclusion that if we are ever to improve the well-being of children in America, first we will have to decrease the number of children who are missing their fathers."
- "The contributions of fathers to child well-being can not be replaced simply by ensuring better child support enforcement, by designing better income transfer policies, or even by providing well-intentioned mentoring programs. Children need their fathers."
- "We have to state the truth that men are more likely to be responsible fathers in the context of committed and legal marriages."
- "Government has a role to play in the reinstatement of fatherhood as a national priority. Our leaders should, first and foremost, use the bully pulpit to support responsible fatherhood."
- "Public policy must once again come to encourage, not discourage, marriage. One big step would be to reestablish income splitting for married couples. In the 1960s, income splitting for married couples was eliminated. Previously, for the purposes of federal income tax, married couples could treat their income as if each earned half. This allowed married couples to be taxed at lower rates than if each were single. The end of income splitting resulted in a marriage penalty. Married couples often pay more in taxes than they would if they were living apart: not exactly an incentive to get and stay married."
- "The welfare system should also be restructured to reward, not punish, marriage. There are, for example, instances where rents in public housing authorities

[35] Richard Louv, *FatherLove* (New York: Pocket Books, 1993).

skyrocket when a single mother chooses to marry. In addition, current AFDC rules prevent a woman from receiving full benefits if the father is at home and has an employment record or works more than 100 hours a month. Wherever such perverse incentives exist, we need to eliminate them."

• "But in the end, most of what government can—and should—do will mostly effect the margins. Cultural problems demand cultural solutions. Government legislation and regulation, although not unimportant, pale in comparison to what the culture can and must accomplish."

Senator COATS. Dr. Popenoe.

Mr. POPENOE. Thank you very much. It is a pleasure to be here, and I just have a few brief remarks and then look forward to the discussion.

I want to focus my remarks on something we do not talk about enough, it seems to me. For example, President Clinton, in his State of the Union Address, with a lot on the family, did not mention one word, which is going to be the focus of my talk, and that is "marriage." The underlying connection between fatherhood and marriage is something that is central in every society.

Marriage in recent decades has declined in two main respects, both of which are highly consequential for children. Divorces have steeply increased, as we all know, now standing at the remarkably high rate of around 50 percent of all marriages. And out-of-wedlock births have dramatically jumped in a little more than three decades from only 5 percent in 1960 to nearly one-third of all births today.

While these rates are highest among the poor, divorce and out-of-wedlock childbearing have become truly national problems, found across the social and economic spectrum. The rates among Hollywood glitterati, for example, are little different from the rates among urban ghetto residents. In all segments of the spectrum, the children of broken families are being damaged.

The evidence shows that, compared to children of intact families, they have two to three times the likelihood of having serious behavioral and emotional problems when they become adolescents and adults.

Much of the cause for these problems lies, directly or indirectly, as I go into in great deal in my books, with absent fathers. The evidence is now strong—fathers matter. And although there are many caring and responsible nonresident-fathers, the alarmingly simple fact is that men are unlikely to stay close to their children unless they are married to their children's mother. Men tend to view marriage and child-rearing as a single package. If they are not married or are divorced, their interest in and sense of responsibility toward children greatly diminish. Some studies have found that at least half of all divorced or unmarried fathers lose all regular contact with their children over time.

Why is marriage so important to fatherhood? Because being a father is universally problematic for men. While mothers the world over bear and nurture their young with an intrinsic acknowledgment of their role, fathers are often filled with conflict and doubt. Men are not biologically as attuned to being committed fathers as women are to being committed mothers—by the way, I cleared that phrase with my daughter, so it is politically correct—even though high paternal investments in children have been a source of enormous evolutionary advantage for human beings.

The evolutionary logic is this: Women, who can bear only a limited number of children, have a great incentive to invest their energy in rearing children, while men, who can father many offspring, do not. Left culturally unregulated, men's sexual behavior can be promiscuous, their paternity casual, their commitment to families weak.

Marriage is society's way of engaging this basic problem of fatherhood—how to hold the father to the mother-child bond. Simply defined, marriage is the social institution whereby society socially approves and encourages sexual intercourse and the birth of children. It stresses a strong social bond which includes the long run commitment of the male, the durability of the marital relationship, and the importance of the union for children.

In addition, because marriage includes exclusive sexual obligations and rights, the institution helps to prevent men from openly pursuing other men's wives. This in turn increases what is called "paternity confidence," which is critical to the involvement of fathers in childrearing.

It cannot be news that marriage today is losing this social purpose. Marriage is now less an institution that one belongs to and more a vehicle to be used to one's own advantage. "Until death do us part" has quietly been replaced by "So long as I am happy." Fewer than 50 percent of Americans today, for example, even cite "being married" as part of their definition of "family values."

To reclaim fatherhood in America, we must shore up the institution of marriage. We cannot return to the so-called "Ozzie and Harriet" breadwinner-housewife family of the fifties. That time has long since passed. But many ways exist to strengthen and stabilize marriage, to make marriage a more satisfying as well as more durable social relationship, and a concerted national effort toward these ends should immediately be launched. We should be every bit as much concerned about our Nation's family environment as we are about our Nation's economic and natural environments.

Much of the need change, of course, as Wade Horn well realizes, must come in the cultural, moral and spiritual realms—and our other panelists as well. But the Federal Government can and must play a role. I suggest that top priority be given to the following five Federal Government initiatives—and I have picked here initiatives that apply to all segments of the population, and I will leave for others and for the discussion the issue of how to deal specifically with welfare and other very low-income populations.

So these are my top five priorities. A couple of them have been on the table for a long time and just need some expansion; others are a little new.

One, extend the terms of the current Family and Medical Leave Act to permit parents more time off from work for a 6-month period following the birth or adoption of a child, with partial pay for the first 3 months. The reason is that parents, more than anything else, need time. According to abundant empirical evidence, the month following the birth or adoption of a child is the most stressful period in the life-course of the average marriage; it often sets the stage for later divorce. Providing parents more time to be with their children and with each other would help to alleviate this

stress. I might also add that a move in this direction would bring us more in line with virtually every other industrialized Nation.

Two, in addition to needing time, parents of children need money, so I would favor—and this is, of course, something of a tax buster and would have to be weighed or scaled down—double the personal tax exemption for dependent children to $5,000 per child. This increase would make the value of the exemption more comparable to what it was in the 1950's. As is the case currently, the exemption could be phased out at higher income levels.

Three—and this is what brings enormous snickers when I present this at Rutgers University to various groups—for married couples with dependent children, increase their personal tax exemption for each year after 5 years that they remain married. The increase would not have to be great—it could be mostly symbolic—but it would be a stunning affirmation that long-lasting marriages are in the national interest. Why 5 years? The average divorce in America takes place in year 6, so once they get to that point, you give them a little incentive.

Four, develop and widely promulgate an annual measurement of our Nation's marital and family health, much like the Government today provides annual measurements of our economic health. The importance of marriage must be publicized more widely. This would be an effective way to start.

In addition to divorce and out-of-wedlock birth rates, it should include such indicators as the percent of children living apart from their two married parents and the percent of children living apart from their biological fathers.

And five and last, develop, test and circulate widely on an advisory basis—the way the Federal Government does a lot of things—premarital education programs. There are a lot of them out there, and they are wonderful. Such programs have been found to be very effective, both for strengthening future marriages and for alerting couples to factors associated with high divorce rates, thus leading some badly-suited couples to abandon their marriage plans. We should strive nationally for every marriage to be preceded by thoughtful consideration.

Thank you very much.

Senator COATS. Dr. Popenoe, thank you. We appreciate your testimony and your work at Rutgers on this subject.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Popenoe follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID POPENOE

I want to stress this morning one of the most important connections in every human society, that between fatherhood and marriage. It is now well known that the fathers of America are increasingly out of the lives of their children. The percentage of children living apart from their biological fathers has jumped from 17 percent in 1960 to about 37 percent today, an historical highpoint for this nation. Less widely discussed is the main reason for this unfortunate trend—the decline of marriage.

Marriage in recent decades has declined in two main respects, both of which are highly consequential for children. Divorces have steeply increased, now standing at the remarkably high rate of around 50 percent of all marriages. And out-of-wedlock births have dramatically jumped in a little more than three decades from only 5 percent in 1960 to nearly one-third of all births today. While these rates are highest among the poor, divorce and out-of-wedlock childbearing have become truly national problems, found across the social and economic spectrum. The rates among Hollywood glitterati, for example, are little different from the rates among urban ghetto

residents. In all segments of the spectrum the children of broken families are being damaged. The evidence shows that, compared to the children of intact families, they have two to three times the likelihood of having serious behavioral and emotional problems when they become adolescents and adults.

Much of the cause for these problems lies, directly or indirectly, with the absent fathers. The evidence is now strong—fathers matter. And, although there are many caring and responsible non-resident fathers, the alarmingly simple fad is that men are unlikely to stay close to their children unless they are married to their children's mother. Men tend to view marriage and childrearing as a single package. If they are not married or are divorced, their interest in and sense of responsibility toward children greatly diminish. Some studies have found that at least half of all divorced or unmarried fathers lose all regular contact with their children over time.

Why is marriage so important to fatherhood? Because being a father is universally problematic for men. While mothers the world over bear and nurture their young with an intrinsic acknowledgment of their role, fathers are often filled with conflict and doubt. Men are not biologically as attuned to being committed fathers as women are to being committed mothers, even though high paternal investments in children have been a source of enormous evolutionary advantage for human beings. The evolutionary logic is this: Women, who can bear only a limited number of children, have a great incentive to invest their energy in rearing children, while men, who can father many offspring, do not. Left culturally unregulated, men's sexual behavior can be promiscuous, their paternity casual, their commitment to families weak.

Marriage is society's way of engaging the basic problem of fatherhood—how to hold the father to the mother-child bond. Simply defined, marriage is the social institution whereby society socially approves and encourages sexual intercourse and the birth of children. It stresses a strong social bond which includes the long-run commitment of the male, the durability of the martial relationship, and the importance of the union for children. In addition, because marriage includes exclusive sexual obligations and rights, the institution helps to prevent men from openly pursuing other men's wives. This, in turn, increases what ii called paternity confidence, which is critical to the involvement of fathers in childrearing.

It can not be news that marriage today is losing this social purpose. Marriage is now less an institution that one belongs to, and more a vehicle to be used to one's own advantage. "Till death do us part" has quietly been replaced by "so long as I am happy." Fewer than 50 percent of Americans today, for example, even cite "being married" as part of their definition of "family values."

To reclaim fatherhood in America, we must shore up the institution of marriage. We can't return to the so-called Ozzie and Harriet breadwinner-housewife family of the fifties; that time has long since passed. But many ways exist to strengthen and stabilize marriage, to make marriage a more satisfying as well as more durable social relationship, and a concerted national effort toward these ends should immediately be launched. We should be every bit as much concerned about our nation's family environment as we are about our nation's economic and natural environments.

Much of the needed change, of course, must come in the cultural, moral and spiritual realms. But the federal government can and must play a role. I suggest that top priority be given to the following five government initiatives (These are initiatives that apply to all segments of the population; I will leave for others the issue of how to deal specifically with welfare and other very low-income populations):

1. Extend the terms of the current family and medical leave act to permit parents time off from work for a six month period following the birth of adoption of a child, with partial pay for the first three months. According to abundant empirical evidence, the months following the birth or adoption of a child is the moot stressful period in the life-course of the average marriage; it often sets the stage for later divorce. Providing parents more time to be with their children, and with each other, would help to alleviate this stress.

2. Double the personal tax exemption for dependent children to $5,000 per child. Apart from more time, money is whet young, childrearing couples say they are most in need of. This increase would make the value of the exemption more comparable to what it was in the 1950's. As is the case currently, the exemption should be phased out at higher income levels.

3. For married couples with dependent children, increase their personal tax exemption for each year, after five years, that they remain married. The increase would not have to be great; it could be mostly symbolic. But it would be a stunning affirmation that long lasting marriages are in the national interest.

4. Develop and widely promulgate an annual measurement of our nations marital and family health, much like the government today provides annual measurements

of our economic hearth. The importance of marriage must be publicized more widely; this would be an effective way to start. In addition to divorce and out-of-wedlock birth rates, it should include such indicators as the percent of children living apart from their two married parents, and the percent of children living apart from their biological fathers.

5. Develop, test, and circulate widely, on an advisory basis, premarital education programs. Such programs have been found to be effective both for strengthening future marriages and for alerting couples to factors associated with high divorce rates (thus leading some badly suited couples to abandon their marriage plans.) We should strive nationally for every marriage to be preceded by thoughtful consideration.

DAVID POPENOE, Associate Dean for Social and Behavioral Sciences, Rutgers University

David has written extensively about family breakdown from both a domestic and international perspective. He tends to emphasize the importance of restoring marriage as a valued institution as a necessary prerequisite for increasing the number of involved and committed fathers.

"LIFE WITHOUT FATHER" **by David Popenoe**

Popenoe discusses the following topics on the subject of fatherhood:

The linkage of father-absence not just to child development problems, but more broadly to social pathology throughout society.

The analysis of the evolutionary psychology of fatherhood, why biological fathers are so important, and why fathering is different from mothering.

How we can bring fathers back, which involves a balance between keeping the best of the past and bending to changing social and economic circumstances.

To promote the goal of reestablishing marriage, Popenoe suggests that employers create personnel policies and work environments that respect and favor the marital commitment by reducing the practice of relocating married couples with children; provide generous parental leave; and experiment with working at home.

Popenoe makes a plea to religious leaders and organizations to reclaim moral ground from the culture of divorce and nonmarriage; avoid equating "committed relationships" with marriage; establish new educational and pastoral programs designed to promote the commitment to marriage and prepare young people for parenthood.

To the entertainment industry, Popenoe urges Hollywood not to glamorize unwed motherhood, marital infidelity, and sexual promiscuity. To civic leaders and community organizers, Popenoe suggests that they form grassroots social movements designed to protect marriage and family life; develop economic strategies aimed at providing more job opportunities for young males, especially poorly educated minority males.

"My main emphasis will be on children. I hope to convince you, especially those of you who rely on empirical evidence before you make up your mind, that the evidence is strong:Fathering is different from mothering; involved fathers are indispensable for the good of children and society; and our growing national fatherlessness is a disaster in the making."

Senator COATS. Charles Ballard, it is a pleasure to have you here, sir.

Mr. BALLARD. Thank you, Senator. It is a pleasure being here, and I have some good news for you. I was in South Bend, IN last month, meeting with the Memorial Hospital staff, and they are encouraging us strongly to bring the program into Indiana, so they will be the first in your State when we get to that point.

Senator COATS. We welcome you; thank you.

Mr. BALLARD. I am really overcome with this idea of someone addressing the issue of fatherhood. It is so encouraging at this time of fatherlessness. I am encouraged by my two colleagues' comments this morning, and I think they have already taken up half my speech, so I will not go into that.

Let me go right to the heart of the matter and share with you what we can do, along with what they have said, about this problem.

I am married to Frances Hall Ballard, who is executive vice president of our company. We have three children—Jonathan, who

is 11; Lydia, who is 9; and Christopher, who will be 2 years old next month.

I started the program, the concept, 20 years ago, when I was not married, but what has kept me in this field today against all pressure have been my wife and my children.

I came home from a trip last week, and little Christopher was playing ball with his brother and sister. He saw me across the lawn, and he began to run at breakneck speed, crying out, "Daddy, daddy, daddy." I dropped my bags, picked him up, and he just held me so tight, like he was trying to nurture me and say, "It's all right; you are home now."

And I asked myself what would happen if all children in America could run to their fathers in that way, and that has encouraged me to stay in this field and make sure that every child knows where his father is.

I have a master's degree and a B.A. degree; I run a national program, and I have a nationally-recognized name. But it was not always like that. I grew up in Alabama in some really tough times for African Americans. My father was committed to an institution because of mental illness, and he died there.

I became a young father at the age of 17, ran away, abandoned the mother and the child, got into drugs and alcohol, and was sent to prison for a crime I did not commit. While I was in prison, I met an old man who had met Christ, and he told me about the importance of being a man of God, a father, and a leader. I received Christ into my heart and overcame drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, violence, the whole bit.

I got out of prison, and I went to my son's mother, and I said, "I want to ask you to forgive me for leaving you, and I want to help my son." She gave him to me in 1959; I adopted him. I had a prison record. I was kicked out of the army as an undesirable. I had not finished high school. So I could not get a job. But what took me through it was my relationship with Jesus Christ and having my son.

Now, I am not sure what it is, but when a man's heart is attached to his child, something happens inside of his mind. He will take low-paying jobs, it does not matter—dishwashing jobs, scrubbing floors, no matter what—that is what I did because I wanted to make sure that this boy understood what it meant to be loved.

I went on to get my G.E.D., my B.A. degree and my master's degree. When I began to work at the hospital in Cleveland, I noticed that in all the records, there was no mention of fathers. As I spoke with these mothers, and they gave me the names of these fathers, and I began to visit these guys, I found out that they were in the same boat that I was in some years before; they wanted support and help, but there was no one around to give it to them.

So we created the institute to reach out to fathers and to bring them back into their children's lives. We only hire married couples to run our program because we want to put marriage forth as the norm, not the exception. We only hire people who can live risk-free life-styles, because right now in my community, most of our deaths are related to our life-styles. So we need people in our community who do not use drugs, who do not smoke cigarettes, who do not use alcohol, and who are nonviolent. And we only hire people from the

community where we serve. So we put role models, we put counselors, and we put support for the community back into the community. This year, we are going to be reaching 16,000 households in 6 communities, and the goal is to reach 1,000 fathers in each city and reconnect those fathers to their children.

If what Dr. Popenoe and Dr. Horn have said is true, then the key to all of this is to reconnect the child's heart to the father, and to reconnect the father's heart to the child.

I want to close with a comment. I am reminded of a song by a Belgian singer who sings: "...seeing the world through the eyes of a child. How many prayers will it take, how many tears must we cry, before we can walk across that bridge of hope—to peace on the other side."

I believe we can accomplish this and much more by turning the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers.

Thank you very much.

Senator COATS. Charles, thank you very much for sharing that with us.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ballard follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHARLES A. BALLARD, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT, INSTITUTE FOR RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY REVITALIZATION

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, distinguished speakers, colleagues, and guests, it is indeed an honor and a privilege to participate in this hearing to address a subject that is so burdens my heart and that is the subject of fatherlessness. Our children are paying too high a price for fatherlessness. Twenty-three million American children are living without fathers in their homes. Of this 23 million, 6.5 million are African American children. The problem of fatherlessness is born in the home.

People are saying that it takes a village to raise a child, but first it takes a mother and a father, who are understanding, compassionate, nurturing, and responsible-working together to instill discipline, character, honesty, integrity, and responsibility in their children. It seems that the days when peace and community spirit prevailed in a neighborhood are gone.

Fatherlessness is linked to the increase in murders, assaults, drive by shootings, and drug and alcohol abuse. Fatherlessness is the cause of teenage pregnancy, infant mortality, suicide, neglect, and abandonment. Fatherlessness is the root cause of truancy, education failure, community failure, and despair. Fatherlessness is the reason one in three African American Fathers are under judicial supervision, e.g., prison, parole, and probation. Although African American males represent less than ten percent of the U.S. population, they are the majority behind bars. The largest age group is between 18 and 35 years of age. This represents the most crucial time when a child needs his or her father. The number one killer of African American males is homicide—another symptom of fatherlessness. Fatherlessness, is left unchecked and uncorrected will lead to the demise of our American society as we have known it.

I understand what fatherlessness is all about. There was a time when I was one of those angry young men. My own father was committed to a mental institution when I was three years old. As a teen, I dropped out of high school, fathered, and abandoned a child out of wedlock. While serving the in the U.S. Army, I was convicted and incarcerated for a crime I did not commit. I should say right now that incarcerating people does not provide the kind of help they need. In fact, many young people simply learn how to become criminals when they go to prison. By placing young people with older adults and even more seasoned young criminals, many times the impact on their lives is negative and the experience they have in prison enhances their criminal mind. I think I was one of the fortunate individuals who met an older person who made a difference in his life. I cannot recall the gentleman's name, but he taught me what it meant to be a man and what it meant to be a father. He was a father figure, a friend, a teacher, a model, and a mentor-all rolled into one. I really want to stress the importance of this because I am not sure I would be alive today if I had not met this person. Who he was as a father figure,

as a nurturer, as a friend, taught me the importance of fathers in the lives of children. In my life, personally, also in the life of my son, this gentleman taught me that I should go back to my son's mother and apologize for abandoning her and my son and assist her by being the kind of parent every child needs to have. Another significant thing that he taught me—was the complete role that God wanted in the life of every fathers. When I accepted Christ into my life, I was able to overcome drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and violence. I understood the importance of being totally responsible and about how one should feel regarding the world around him.

When I was released from prison in late 1959, I went back to my home in Bessemer, AL. Because of my prison record; being undesirably discharged from the Armed Forces; and because I had not finished high school, it was very difficult for me to find meaningful and gainful employment. However, once I had found my son, adopted him, and took him to live with me, it was my responsibility to do what was right by him and insure his safety. I took jobs, cleaning people's yards; cleaning out their basements; busing and washing dishes at a restaurant; and doing whatever was legally necessary to raise my son with integrity, respect, and compassion. Finally, I received my GED; entered in Oakwood College in Alabama and in 1970 received my B.A. degree; and went on to seek my masters degree-which I received in 1972 from Case Western Reserve University. I venture to say that because of this positive role modeling, my son has completed his education and is a social service administrator, pursuing his master's degree, is married and has four children.

People will tell us that the problems that cause a father's lack involvement with their children is due to the shortage of jobs, affordable housing, and healthcare. I want to stress that it is important for a father to have a job. I want to stress that it is important for children to live in clean, safe, and affordable housing. I want to also stress that just like the government providing tree lawyers for criminals, we should provide tree healthcare to all men, women, and children. I want to make it very clear that the ability of a man to nurture his child, to show love and respect, and to honor the child's mother is distinct from his having a job, housing, and these kinds of things. It was when I decided to take care of my son against all odds, with or without a job, housing, or healthcare, it was then that these things became a reality. If I had waited to find a job before I took my son; if I had waited to get affordable housing before I took my son; and if I had waited before I had healthcare before I took my son; it is very possible that I would not have been sitting here before you today. When my heart was knitted to my child's heart-when I learned to nurture him and receive his nurturing, chemical changes began to take place in my mind. In a very basic way, there began a change in my behavior towards life itself. Perhaps to put it another way, this chemical change became the very music that reached into the process of what I called life. This technology, this process—it is this gift that the Institute brings to the life of a father. Let me go back and share with you how it all began.

While working in a Cleveland hospital, supervising community health aides, whose jobs were primarily to assist pregnant mothers and women to get prenatal and postnatal care, I discovered that most of the files never mentioned nor included the father. As I began to talk with the workers, they indicated that there was no place on the form for the fathers name to go, nor were there any questions on the form to be answered by him. I began talking to the mothers and pregnant women in the clinic and discovered that many were already disconnected from the child's father. So armed with the mothers's name and the name and address of the father, I began to go out into the community and seek out these fathers and reconnect them with their children. You see, I had a story to tell that people could relate to and I used it to inspire others to try to make a difference. I knew that this was to be my life's work. For more than twenty years, I have been working to develop a home-based model which reclaims fathers to their families. I wanted a program that promoted the premise that people have the will and the capacity to solve their own problems.

We face a challenge to provide guidance to these fathers during a time in which we have seen the decline of the two-parent family. This decline, in my opinion, began in the mid 1960s. In 1950, only nine percent of the African American homes were headed by one person. However, during this period of time, the extended family (e.g., grandfathers, grandmothers, uncles, and aunts), was intact, and churches in these communities were very strong. Single parent homes had much more support from the extended family as well as the community. In the mid 1960's the decline escalated to nearly 20 percent. In the mid 1970's, it reached nearly 30 percent and last year, more than two-thirds of babies born were to single young mothers. In fact, to quote a more glaring figure, in some communities in Washington, DC, our nation's capital, more than 95 percent of teenagers who give birth are not married and in many cases are not in touch with the father at the time of the child's

birth. We can see over a period of 40 years, that the African American family went from strength—to fragile, fragmented, and disconnected families. It is very difficult to build the strength of a nation on the backs of single young mothers who in many cases are uneducated, unskilled, and unmarried.

Researchers show that the psychological well-being of children is dependent upon whether they come from a two-parent family or not. For example, demographer Linda Waite of the University of Chicago found that children of single-parent families are twice as likely to drop out of school and three times as likely to live in poverty than children from two-parent families. Researchers also suggest that there are strong links between fatherlessness, crime, and poverty. The National Fatherhood Initiative, a group that collects data about fatherhood in America, and whose director, Wade Horn, whom I consider to be an esteemed scholar and a dear friend, has tremendous research to support these findings. According to statistics, 50 percent of America's rapists; 72 percent of adolescent murderers; and 70 percent of long-term prison inmates grew up without fathers. Data also exists that clearly links growing up without a father to underachievement in school, mental illness, drug abuse, youth suicide, delinquency, and crime. These are startling statistics. We have to wake up, pull our heads out of the sand, and recognize the destructive power of fatherlessness.

We can no longer only rely on women to raise our children as we have in the past. We have to encourage our society to let men be fathers to their children. Fatherlessness is not simply the absence of a father from a home. Fatherlessness is the condition that exists when a father might be in the home, but does not know how to love his children. It is the condition of a father who emotionally and/or physically abuses his children. It is the condition of a father who uses drugs and who does not work. In effect, fatherlessness is the description of a man who is not living up to his responsibilities.

I should also say that three systems impact the lives of fathers in a very powerful way. Those are the education system, the welfare system, and the judicial system. We know that African American males have the highest educational suspension and expulsion rates of all races and age groups. We also know that per capita, many young mothers who have babies out of wedlock end up on welfare. Much of the reason for this is because the welfare system offers a check, a medical card, and housing without input from the father. Essentially, creating what I call, "federally managed fatherhood abandonment." Perhaps no institution devastates a family more than the justice system. For it takes the father from the home during a period when he is most needed, age 18–30. In fact, as mentioned previously, one in three African American males, ages 19–29, are under direct judicial supervision either in prison, on parole, or on probation. Another shocking revelation, is the increasing number of African American females, who are often times mothers, are also supervised by the judicial system. How serious is this problem? From 1930–1950, we built only five female jails and prisons. However, from 1980–1990, we built thirty-four jails and prison for females. As we look at the increasing number of males and females going to prison, it leaves our children unprotected and exposed to all types of adverse environments and situations. This is the very cause of increased juvenile delinquency and the need for facilities and institutions to house these young people. If we are going to address these problems, we must address the issue of fatherlessness.

The Institute

Working toward my goal of changing the trend of fatherlessness, I felt that a new approach to fathers must be tried. We needed to begin to confront fatherlessness by supporting fathers in various ways—giving them the necessary skills to become better parents. I would like to take a few moments to talk about our work at the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization. We have created a remarkably successful approach that brings fathers, particularly African American fathers, back to their children and families.

Our goal at the Institute is to turn the hearts of fathers to their children and to turn the hearts of children to their fathers. In other words, we want to create a healthy, stable, and safe relationship between fathers and their children. Our program uses an intervention model that has literally changed the lives of thousands of absent and non-attentive fathers. Essentially, our program is a home-based approach that uses what we call "nurturing counseling technology." In the end, because of our intervention, fathers establish paternity; enhance their fathering skills; and improve educational, vocational, and employment opportunities.

To accomplish this goal, we put what we call Outreach Specialists into a community. These "Institute technologies" service providers give fathers non-traditional, one-to-one counseling; one-to-group counseling; and one-to-family counseling. Our Outreach Specialists live and work in the highest risk communities.

Often people in the community have said, how do you know what my problems are if you don't live on my street? That is one of the major reasons that we hire from within the community in which we provide services. We hire a married couple called Managing Partners who reside in the community as role models and oversee the Outreach Specialist in the provision of direct services to fathers and their families. By residing in the community, our Outreach Specialists have direct access to help fathers make a positive change in their relationships with their children.

We go anywhere we have to, to find fathers who need our help. We visit pool halls, schools, basketball courts-wherever we have to go to have a conversation around the issue of fatherlessness. When we find them, we go directly into their homes to conduct intense inductive counseling sessions to get to the very core of their problems and assist the fathers in identifying areas in which he can improve himself, his family, and his children.

Our Outreach Specialists work around the clock to bring families together and to improve neighborhood conditions. They are available to the community 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This shows the community that the worker is very serious and committed to making a difference. This is a different approach from other social service organizations who avail themselves to the community Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. After 5:00 p.m., these organization's workers return to the comfort of their suburban homes-away from violence, crime, and ills of the community.

In helping fathers live up to their responsibilities, we are accomplishing something more than bringing families together. By changing the behavior and attitudes of the father, our program gives children new and positive role models to emulate. The community can visibly see individuals who act as mentors. They can visibly see a difference when someone living within their community mentoring a risk tree lifestyle and is succeeding. This visual impact is important because people say, "if they can make it here, I have a chance." When these children grow up and become adults, they will not be lost and susceptible to the violence and dangers that lurk America's streets. Once our Outreach Specialist have helped make a positive change in the life of a father and family, these children will then come from a place where the father has taught them about honesty, integrity, and decency. They will know how to live and provide for their children and their children's children. They will know how to be contributing citizens to our country.

The positive role models we help create, by mentoring, will help break a deadly pattern of fatherlessness that, if left unchecked, will be repeated throughout the generations as we have seen in these past 30-40 years.

We are greatful that our program has been very successful in having a positive impact on fathers and their families. A 1992 assessment of the Cleveland program conducted by professors at Case Western Reserve University had the following findings of fathers who had completed our program:

- 97 percent of fathers spent more time with their children and provided financial support;
- 96 percent of fathers experienced an improved relationship with the child's mother;
- 92 percent of fathers developed positive attitudes and values;
- and, 62 percent of fathers gained full-time employment and an additional 11 percent gained part-time employment.

The Institute's staff treat the problem of fatherlessness which then impacts its symptoms such as crime, rape, violence, and other dysfunctions. We have designed our training and services to attack the source of the illness. We believe that fatherlessness is the cause of the symptoms. This is why we work to keep fathers with their families. We work to attack fatherlessness itself and not the symptoms. In other words, our counseling counteracts the dysfunction that can fester in children raised in fatherless families

I applaud the creators of the Project for American Renewal This effort will empower organizations and local communities to help themselves and not always depend on federal or state governments to do it for them. Who better knows a community and its problems than the residents who live there. By supporting fathers—nurturers of their children, we can insure the success of this new initiative. The family breakdown, decaying civic institutions, rising crime, addiction, and illegitimacy have seemed virtually immune to politics. It is stated that $5.4 trillion dollars of government spending have turned generations of public policy reformers into cynics and pessimists.

During the Reagan administration 18.4 million new jobs were created without making any significant dent in the underclass. In these communities, 90 percent of children lack a father; the job base is so small that entry level pay is referred to as "chump change;" and young men don't expect to live past their twentieth birth-

day. It seems to me that the Project for American Renewal gives to a community much more of a say in how its life should be ordered. By encouraging churches, synagogues, temples, and other institutions—respected by the people, we not only impact fatherlessness, joblessness, and other problems, but we make a serious dent in the problem of drug use and abuse and violence. President Clinton in a recent speech to high school students in Virginia stated, "Don't you believe that if every kid in every difficult neighborhood in America were in a religious institution on weekends—a synagogue on Saturday, a church on Sunday, a mosque on Friday—don't you really believe that the drug rate, the crime rate, the violence rate, the sense of self-destruction would go way down and the quality and character of this country would go way up?" Just imagine the difference this would have in our communities.

Over the years, several people have recognized the importance of our work and support our concepts. *Norman Hapke, Chairman of the Board of the Jacobs Family Foundation of San Diego, CA,* states, *"To reverse the alarming increase of welfare dependency, violent youth crime, and educational failure, we must increase the number of the children who know and grow up with their fathers." William J. Bennett, Empower America,* says, *"Charles Ballard is doing some of the most important work in America." Dr. Louis W. Sullivan, former Secretary of Health and Human Services says, "The Institute is one of the most structured organizations working with fathers I've seen. It is a model worthy of national replication./" Walter D. Broadnax, former Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services* under President Clinton stated, *"When you think of organizations that are making a difference in the struggle to preserve the American family. The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood quickly comes to mind."*

Researchers such as Dr. Anthony King of the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences have summarized the impact of our work quite succinctly. Dr. King stated, "The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization has the potential to become the most important and effective community-based program since the advent of modern social welfare services. It provides proteges with a sense of purpose, a culturally relevant ethos, and the practical assistance required to become self-actualized."

Recommendations

Children are the future resources of this great country. We need to give them the support and guidance they need to become productive citizens. There is no substitute for fathers. Too many African American males do not see credible male authority figures in their homes, nor on their streets, nor in their schools. Only 1.2 percent of all teachers in the United States are African American males. Many male adults have become visitors in the lives of children, not sources of inspiration and discipline. But we need strong, loving, compassionate, and consistent fathers in the lives of children. We need to put forth more efforts to include fathers in the lives of their children. If a child gets into trouble, the government appoints a lawyer at tax payers' expense. But, it is only for a time. Why not give the child back his father, this works for a lifetime?

We need to encourage equality in pay for mothers and fathers so that it would make parents more available during the day for their children. So many families have both parents working and the child is left to aftercare, or no care-playing on the streets at night. No child in America should be on the street after 10 p.m. Where is the father? Where is the mother? Where are our children? This is so important!

In creating this work, I travel extensively. My children need me at home and I try to be there as often as I can. I am reminded of an incident that took place the other day. My youngest son, "Christopher," age two, saw me arrive at home while playing in the yard with his older brother and sister. He literally ran across the grass with such speed that I was afraid he would fall. He ran with such speed that he could qualify for the Olympic relay team-jumping into my arms, hollering, "Daddy, Daddy." What a tremendous feeling! If every father could see this—if every father could experience a homecoming like this—to see and experience the joy in a child's eyes when his father comes home; it's powerful.

Unfortunately, absent or non-attentive fathers have been regarded as the "problem" in our society, but they really can be the solution. To combat fatherlessness and its attending ills in our cities, we must provide the opportunity for fathers to learn how to nurture, care, and support their children.

One of the best things government can do is to provide support to nonprofit organizations like the Institute that are hitting the root of the problem. Creating more jails to house violent youth is not the answer. Nor, is developing legislation so that we can lock them away for longer periods of time. The answer to the problem is to support organizations that attempt to help American families maintain a solid

foundation in family life so that we create communities in which our children can grow up to be healthy and productive members of our society.

First, to confront fatherlessness and its attending ills—we must provide direct, non-traditional, grassroots, door-to-door intervention services to young fathers, their fathers, and their families.

This will produce:

- fathers marrying the mothers of their children;
- fathers establishing paternity;
- fathers contributing financially to their children;
- fathers nurturing and providing faith environments for their children;
- and fathers reducing violence toward women, children, and other men.

For example, over the next ten years, we will replicate our modeled program in targeted neighborhoods characterized by high rates of single head of households, crime, drugs, and violence. We are canvasing 16,000 household in the five additional cities that we are establishing our program in San Diego, CA; Nashville, TN; Milwaukee, WI; Yonkers, NY; and Washington, DC: We are having a conversation around fatherlessness. We are hitting the very root of the problem and we need support to continue this work.

Second, we must examine all programs to insure that services to fathers are supported by all levels of government—federal, state, and local. This will do the following:

- transform the welfare system by including fathers 100 percent in the lives of their children;
- greatly reduce the incarceration rate of fathers and mothers;
- reduce the case loads of juveniles in the system;
- reduce the many social service programs and their costs;
- and reduce the high death rate among children, youth, and adults.

Third, we must create in the printed and electronic media, a national public information program that promotes positive, loving, and responsible fatherhood images. These images will show fathers hugging their children; fathers having family prayer; fathers reading to their children; fathers assisting with the child's homework; fathers in church worshiping with their families; fathers at work; fathers doing "block watch," fathers cutting the grass; and taking responsibility. This can be done by making great use of television, radio, newspaper, magazines, bumper stickers, billboards, computers, and other forms of communication.

Fourth, we must encourage and support the creators of the Project for American Renewal. We must concentrate and make sure that the provided funds are specifically earmarked for high risk communities. That organizations that receive those dollars, not only establish programs in those communities, but train and hire those living in the communities that are served. Also, there is a need to create specific legislation that will call for a nationwide program on responsible fatherhood that includes appropriate funding for direct services, research, and evaluation.

We live in a time that requires government to take a serious uninterrupted look at how we can combat this outbreak of violence in our society. I commend the Subcommittee on Children and Families for taking a serious look at the issue of responsible fatherhood. As I said earlier, we have to cure the illness rather than take a superficial approach and put bandages on a serious cut. Together, we can be successful in turning the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers.

I am reminded of a song by a Belgian singer who sings, ". . . seeing the world through the eyes of a child. How many prayers will it take, how many tears must we cry, before we can walk across that bridge of hope-to peace on the other side." We can accomplish this and much much more by turning the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers.

Thank you.

CHARLES BALLARD, Founder and President, The National Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Development

Charles and his organization are often cited as models of community and grassroots organizations helping men become responsible fathers. Charles has a compelling life story. His father was taken away from him at an early age because of illness. Charles then fathered a daughter out of wedlock, ran away, and wound up in prison. For the last 12 years he has been working to help men—especially young men whose lives have imitated Ballard's—return to their families and become responsible, involved Dads.

At the hearing, Charles could be accompanied by a Dad and his family who have successfully been re-connected with help from the National Institute for Responsible Fatherhood And Family Development.

"I see a lot of angry kids in my work, but none can match the anger of a boy I knew years ago. He was the second-youngest of six children; his mother was a housewife, his father, a coal miner. He lived in a cinder-block house about a block and a half from the mouth of the mine. As a child, no more than three years old, he used to wait for his father to come up from the mine after his shift.

"Then one day, his father was gone. His long bouts of illness had grown worse, and he was taken away to a mental institution, an asylum. The shame at that sort of thing was strong in those days. The little boy was never told where his father went, and he never saw him again.

"Without his father around, that boy's life got a lot harder. He used to go into the woods and throw rocks into a pond. Some days, he pretended the rocks he threw were aimed at his father.

"When the boy grew up, he left school before he graduated, and fathered a child with a girl he had no intention of marrying. To run away, he joined the Army, but he got into trouble and ended up in prison. That angry young man is someone I knew well, because that man is who Charles Augustus Ballard used to be.

"Today, I pass many angry young men on the street. Many of them have children, but few have families. Few share a home with their sons and daughters and their childrens' mothers.As a society, our approach toward these invisible fathers is a mix of anger and indifference: We're ready to condemn them for their flight from responsibility, and pursue them for child support. Otherwise, we look right through them.

"For 12 years, I've been helping these fathers."

Senator COATS. Randy, we are glad to have you here.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you.

Let me open up by saying I am not sure of the question you have asked, how can Government aid in this crisis we are seeing taking place, and I am here to learn and to listen today. Maybe tomorrow, I will have some better answers to that question of how the Government that is here can be a part of the answer to the crisis we are seeing.

But I do want to reflect what we are seeing today, and I would accent what has already been stated here, that there is a huge crisis which, if not dealt with, this Nation as we know it will be a memory.

Mr. Ballard was just quoting from the last verse in the Old Testament that some of us are familiar with, which talks about the hope that exists that 1 day, God would restore the hearts of fathers to their children and the children to the fathers, and it goes on to say, "...lest the land is smite with a curse." That curse is not speaking of the anger of God, it is speaking of the natural consequences of the disconnection between the role of the father to share sacrificial love in the context of his family and his community. When you lose that, you lose everything; that is what we are seeing taking place.

With Promise Keepers, much of our focus is in the church. I am unfamiliar with many of the issues—well, I am not completely unfamiliar. I am in touch with what is going on in the church, and those who share the commitment to Jesus Christ, who share the same Bible, but the crisis that we are seeing outside is going on in the church, tragically, shamefully, and it should not be that way.

I believe that this country is suffering because we have not truly seen what God has called us to do in a way that is reflected as sacrificial love. So our focus with Promise Seekers is to be a spark to the local church. We believe the local church is the key, and maybe in the discussion we can talk about that community involvement. We are not the answer; we are simply seeking to be a spark or a catalyst, if you will, to help men understand the God-given respon-

sibility in their hearts toward him and toward their families and toward one another.

I am going to cut my comments short, which are there for the record, and show a brief video which will take up the remainder of my allotted minutes—would that be okay, Senator Coats, Senator Faircloth?

Senator COATS. That would be very appropriate; we would be happy to have you do that.

Mr. PHILLIPS. What you are going to see is Promise Keepers, the organization, as it relates to the stadium events. There is much that we are doing outside of stadiums in the local communities, but it gives a picture of what is taking place, briefly, in an environment where many men can feel comfortable dealing with issues that are translating into changed behavior after the event.

[Videotape shown.]

Mr. PHILLIPS. That last part of the video was really an historic event; it is the first time in this country's history, and maybe in world history, that 40,000 pastors—this was in February at the Georgia Dome—from different racial and denominational backgrounds have come together. The truth is, there are walls, and in my closing comment, the factors that we are dealing with here, in every illustration where you feel the passion, it comes down to the individual man. I think all of us would agree. Certainly, legislation and other things that can contribute to helping men in their God-given responsibility are important, but unless the heart is changed, nothing else is going to fix this problem.

So that as men reconcile with God, as they reconcile with each other, our hope is that in our communities, it is more than an experience—but what will it look like in Washington, DC, or in Cleveland, or in Denver, or in Los Angeles, where a man recognizes how much he has caused the pain in his family because of his own selfish pursuits and begins to look at his family as the greatest expression of sacrificial love; what is going to take place in that family? What happens in that church if other men join with him in supporting their paster and one another and begin to reach out within that church to the needs there? What happens when that church begins to reach out to other churches in the community, and the community's needs that they cannot individually address, but collectively, with the common goal of honoring Christ and one another, what could take place in the community with initiatives and partnerships, urban and suburban, that really reflect the love of Christ and the love and support and resources, both in business and church, to the desperate cry that is going on? What would that look like?

That is what we hope will take place through changing one man at a time.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Phillips follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RANDY T. PHILLIPS

I. Promise Keepers Mission Statement

Promise Keepers is a Christ-centered ministry dedicated to uniting men through vital relationships to become a godly influence in their world.

II. The Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper

2. A Promise Keeper is committed to honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer and obedience to God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. A Promise Keeper is committed to pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.

3. A Promise Keeper is committed to practicing spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity.

4. A Promise Keeper is committed to building strong marriages and families through love, protection and biblical values.

5. A Promise Keeper is committed to supporting the mission of his church by honoring and praying for his pastor, and by actively giving his time and resources.

6. A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.

7. A Promise Keeper is committed to influencing his world, being obedient to the Great Commandment (see Mark 12:30-31) and the Great Commission (see Matthew 28:19-20).

III. Landmarks in Promise Keepers History:

• **1,388,105 men** reached through **28 conferences** over **six years**;

• nearly **40,000 pastors** attended the 1996 National Clergy Conference for Men, representing all **50 states and 23 nations;**

• **35,000 active church partnerships;**

• daily program "Promise Keepers Radio Highlights" airs on over **1,000 stations;**

• in 1996, **$115 million budget, 400 staff** in Denver and **38 state offices;**

IV. Challenges facing responsible fatherhood in the United States:

• 90 percent of single parent families are led by women, numbering 30 million families. (Census Bureau, 1992)

• 70 percent of juvenile offenders in long-term facilities grew up fatherless. (Philip Lawler, Wall St. Journal, Aug. 13, 1993)

• Jean Bethke-Elshtain wrote in *Christian Century* that broken homes contributed to 3 in 4 teen suicides, and 4 in 5 psychiatric admissions. (July 14, 1993)

• Some projections say less than a third of children born in 1980 will grow up with both parents in the home.

V. How Promise Keepers applies its principles: to encourage men, and facilitate the church to equip men for fatherhood.

• Men are facing **isolation**, isolation at dangerous levels and at epidemic proportions. This isolation has tragic effects upon a man's life and relationships. The marriage suffers, the children suffer, our work suffers, our church suffers. All because we're not in a vital relationship with Almighty God, and therefore, not relating well to those around us. Promise Keepers prescribes a solution: a relationship with Jesus Christ, and a relationship with a few other men.

• Without the *discipline* and *modeling behavior* a father can bring to raising boys and girls, the question for children remains **what is a man like as a husband? as a father? as a friend?**

• **how does a man behave?** responsibly . . . or recklessly?

• **how does a man show love?** tenderly and respectfully . . . or selfishly?

• **how does a man deal with anger?** patiently or violently?

• **how does a man deal with fear?** by withdrawing . . . or with courage?

• **how does a man deal with stress?** destructively to himself and others . . . or prayerfully?

• **how does a man deal with fatigue?** with conviction and determination . . . or with resignation?

• **how does a man deal with different races and cultures?** with sensitivity and respect . . . or prejudice?

These are all things *fathers* can *best* model for and teach to their children.

• Beyond the historic benefits of Christianity upon our society: charity, health care, social support, an enduring moral code, passing on our faith to our children gives them a compelling sense of history, personal value in today's world and purpose for the future.

• Promise Keepers' goal: reconnect men with Heavenly Father, their brothers, families, communities.

VI. Promise Keepers wishes to express appreciation to single moms everywhere doing a phenomenal job of raising Kids alone against incredible odds

• We do not want to, in any way, imply that single moms are not getting the job done (when the fact is they are doing incredibly well). **We can say for sure that kids benefit when dad's around, and those negative behaviors mentioned are reduced across society when loving, committed dads are in the picture.**

VII. Promise Keepers remains an apolitical, non-profit ministry, with no candidates to endorse, and no legislation to advance. I sit before you today at the Invitation of Senator Coats. My hope is to bring before you what the hundreds of thousands of men who are active in Promise Keepers are concerned most about, an active faith in Jesus Christ that makes a difference in the world around us, most of all, our families.

VIII. What would our nation look like if . . .

• Promise Keepers believes many issues in our communities, especially the issue of responsible fatherhood, can only be solved by churches working *together.*

• IX. Anecdotal evidence . . . from the PK mailbag.

PromiseKeepers is a national Christian ministry aimed at restoring men to responsible roles in their families. PromiseKeepers holds rallies of 50,000 to 80,000 men in pro football stadiums across the country, and the organization's Washington, DC rally—attracting 60,000 men, will be held at RFK Stadium on May 24-25.

Senator COATS. Thank you very much. I appreciate the testimony from all four of our witnesses, which I think not only highlighted the problem, but offered some constructive solutions.

I feel a little bit at cross-purposes chairing this hearing, because you have all indicated in one sense or another that, while there is a role that Government might be able to play, at least "Do no harm," have our policies not bias against those who are struggling to keep their families together, have the income to raise their families and the time to spend with their families, clearly, the solution lies outside of anything that we can legislate here. Hopefully, the very least that we do here is to highlight the problem and highlight efforts that are underway to address that problem, and some of the successes.

I took the opportunity to attend the Million Man March, and I was struck by the fact that people really were not there to listen to any particular speaker, but they were African American men from across the country who were there to search for and identify with the concept of the responsibility of a man—faith responsibility—and that faith differed for many of the people who were there and was expressed in different ways—family responsibilities, responsibilities to their children and to their communities.

By the same token, Promise Keepers is a phenomenon that I am still attempting to understand. I am happy for it—I know that you sell out in the largest stadiums in the country every week. You came to Indianapolis and 60,000-some people jammed into the Hoosier Dome—the largest crowd ever to attend. We have had NFL football championships, the NCAA Final Four, Indiana high school basketball, which is bigger than either of those other two in Indiana, and never have we seen so many people in the Hoosier Dome.

So there is a phenomenon here of men wanting to understand their role and understanding how they can reconnect, and I think that is all very, very healthy.

I have a number of questions that I would like to ask, and again I want to go back to the format that I talked about earlier. I do not want it just to be my question and your answer. I want you to ask questions. I want you to ask each other questions. And I want Senator Faircloth to feel free to jump in.

Let me just ask a couple of preliminary questions, and then we will open it up. First, is there any dispute—there has been some mention that this trend that we are observing of children without fathers—is this unprecedented in history? Is there any dispute of that fact? Can any historians on the panel here go back and say,

Oh, yes, there were other periods in history when this happened, and this is what the consequences were, or are we charting new territory here?

Mr. POPENOE. Well, it is the reason for father absence that has changed. If you go back to early American history, a very high percentage of young people did not reach adulthood with both parents still living. The death rate was incredibly high, as we all know. Today, all of these parents are living, and they away for another reason. So that around 1960, we reached a point where, more because of the lowered death rate and not yet too high divorce and out-of-wedlock birth rates, we reached a point where only 17 percent of kids were living apart from their fathers, living in intact families. Today we have jumped to a new historical high, and more kids living apart from their fathers in the sense that their fathers are still alive, than ever before in American history.

So what we have today is very new, and let me just conclude by saying that it used to be thought in the social sciences that losing your father through death and losing your father through divorce was functionally the same thing. The evidence now is quite clear that that is wrong, that there is a tremendous difference between losing a father through death and losing a father through divorce, much less through out-of-wedlock births.

Mr. BALLARD. First of all, I would like to introduce to you some of our people who came from Cleveland this morning; they drove all night last night.

Mr. and Mrs. Grimes, would you mind standing, please?

Mr. and Mrs. Stewart and Mr. Travich; they came with our worker from Cleveland, Mr. Jennings. And we have a couple whom we transferred to Ward 7 here from Cleveland to run our program, a young couple with a family, and they are Mr. and Mrs. Sharp. They moved here to live to make sure the program works here in Washington, DC as well as anyplace else.

Thank you very much.

Senator COATS. We welcome all of you, and at some future point, Mr. Ballard, I want you to describe how you do the work you do. I know your goal and your mission is to reconnect fathers with their families, and I would like you to explain how.

But let me just continue to ask——

Mr. BALLARD. But I want to address this issue. As part of our training, we look at not just fatherhood in America, but fatherhood in the history of the world. There have been countries that have been wiped out altogether, and that is because the men became irresponsible. When there were wars, and a tribe came in, they killed the men first, and they changed the name of the city and changed the name of the whole country.

So that when men are in disrepair, then women and children are at tremendous risk. In this country, this is the first time we have seen this kind of thing happen. In 1950, in my community, 9 percent of the homes were headed by one person, so 91 percent of the children had a father and a mother in the home. So this is a disaster that is headed toward something worse than that.

So I think that we have answers to these problems, and we must address them head-on.

Senator COATS. Let me ask Dr. Horn and Dr. Popenoe, is there any dispute among the studies or the experts in terms of the relationship between the consequences of father absence? I know that at one point not that long ago, there was considerable debate among the experts in terms of what the consequences were. Some were saying it is not all that consequential, other were saying it was. Are there sufficient objective scientific studies and sociological studies to indicate that there is now pretty much unanimity on the consequences?

Mr. HORN. There is no longer any serious debate that father absence, particularly father absence that is voluntary in the sense of as a function of abandonment or divorce, has serious negative consequences for children. There are those who a short time ago were arguing that most of that effect, if not all of that effect, was related to income; that, as we know, for example, single-mother households are more likely to be poor. But studies by a variety of scholars who have looked at or have controlled for income have found that we still see very significant negative effects of the absence of a father. So whether you are looking at poor families, middle class families or affluent families, if fathers are absent, particularly for reasons of divorce or abandonment, children do worse, and there really is no serious debate any longer about that notion.

Senator COATS. Do you agree with that, Dr. Popenoe?

Mr. POPENOE. I guess not quite. I wish that the battle was over, so to speak, but I think there is still serious debate in some segments of the academic community both on the economic ground and on the fact that maybe the problem is that the marriage was rotten, and that is what is causing the difficulty, and the mere fact that a divorce place does not change anything.

But it certainly is the case, as Wade said, that in the last 5 years, there has been a growing body of evidence which has shown unmistakably that children growing up in nonintact families have a much higher risk for various problems.

And by the way, the importance of this data is that it was the first that followed kids over time, for 10 or 15 years. The peak of the divorce revolution was in the seventies, and they followed them over time, and these are the data that are now most widely referred to. The early studies of divorce were done at a single point in time when the kids were still young, and they did not show as much of a problem as these later studies do.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Just a question, and I can speculate as to what the answer is, but I would like to hear the point that both of you made that there is a difference between the effect on a child if they lose the father through death versus divorce or abandonment. I would like to hear how that affects that child differently.

Mr. HORN. If I could talk a little bit about that, there was a very fascinating study in the 1970's by Mavis Heatherington, a famous developmental psychologist, who studied the impact of the death of a father versus the divorce of a father on the psychological development of girls. She expected to find that there would be no great difference, that, as Dr. Popenoe suggested, for a long time, the idea or the notion was that death was the functional equivalent of divorce or abandonment when it came to father absence. What she found instead was that for those daughters whose fathers had died,

what they experienced was an inhibition in terms of their sexuality; that is, they were shy sexually. Quite differently, when a father was absence because of divorce, the girls became very aggressive sexually. That is, it seems that when fathers die, the girls lose a model for how to relate to other men, and in response to that, they become somewhat inhibited. But when fathers leave because of divorce, they become promiscuous.

This was quite fascinating, and it led to a series of studies that looked at the differences between the psychological impact of death versus divorce and abandonment. The notion is that when fathers die, the memory of the father is kept very much alive in the household. The mother literally keeps the pictures of the father on the wall, on the desk, and often invokes the memory of the father in very positive ways—things like, "If your father were here today, he would be so proud of you," or "If your father were here today, he would be so disappointed"—but the point is that the father's memory is very much alive and part of that child's life.

When it comes to divorce or abandonment, a very different thing happens. The pictures come down from the wall, and the mother tends to say things like, "That bum; we are better off without him," or "Don't mention his name in my presence; I do not want to hear about him anymore"; "We really don't need him; he was a jerk, anyway." The memory is very different, and the relationship between the child and that father is very different than it is when the father has died.

Mr. POPENOE. I can only add to that that the data that I was referring to before show very little difference between a child who loses a father through death and a child growing up in an intact family. I saw some European data which in fact showed that if the dad died when the child was 8 or 9, that the child actually did slightly better. The reason is because then, the father can be completely idealized, and you don't have this guy who may be causing you trouble at certain times.

Mr. HORN. Don't give my 13-year-old daughter any ideas.

Mr. POPENOE. But the point here, as Dr. Horn points out, really is the relationship and the feelings about the father that are everything. And you can have a very strong relationship and feelings, of course, toward a father who has died. The father who has divorced or abandoned you is a different story.

Senator COATS. Let me call on Senator Faircloth for comments or questions.

Senator FAIRCLOTH. I really did not have a lot of questions. I am enjoying hearing what you have to say. Back to what was said earlier, this phenomenon has really struck since 1964. As I said, we have put into poverty programs—and they begin with the out-of-wedlock births, generally—over $5 trillion, almost the amount of the national debt, into them, and we have seen the rapid escalation of out-of-wedlock births, as I said, from below 7 to above 36 now. And of course, we all know that the young girl who has a child out-of-wedlock is born into a one-parent out-of-wedlock family, and—I have seen various figures—but she is roughly 170 percent more likely to herself have a child out-of-wedlock.

I would like you to address what brought this about. I mean, we have had out-of-wedlock births since the beginning of mankind, I

guess, but we have seen this enormous escalation of it. Has it been the welfare programs? Has it been the fact that we as a society have agreed to subsidize—and that is what we are doing—do we encourage it by the fact that we provide for a young woman who is pregnant an apartment, a stipend, food stamps, and all of the benefits? Has that encouraged it? I would like you to address that side of it.

Mr. POPENOE. Well, there is an awful lot that can be done to change welfare, to improve the situation, but——

Senator FAIRCLOTH. But my question was, has the Federal welfare system tended to supplant the father or make him feel unimportant and unneeded? I mean, if he is necessary to bring home that pay check on Friday night, he becomes a pretty important part of that family; but if it survives very nicely without his pay check, have we diminished his role?

Mr. POPENOE. I think there is this perverse effect of welfare, there is absolutely no doubt about it. But this is still a fairly small percentage of the population, and when you stop to think that virtually everybody in Hollywood, so to speak, is doing exactly the same thing, and they are not getting any welfare checks, and it is filtering across the Nation—so that is what leads us to conclude that it really is a major values shift. At one time, illegitimate was about the worst thing you could be; and of course, we do not want to go back to the time when every kid was stigmatized that way, but we have gotten now to the exact opposite extreme where there are young women in my own university who say they are not even going to bother getting a man; they are just going to have a child and make do as best they can. And by the way, a lot of them are never going to go on welfare.

So it really is a serious national values shift, and that is, of course, why the Federal Government has its hands tied a little bit on how it is going to be able to grapple with this.

Mr. HORN. Of course, welfare has made the problem worse. It was designed to. Welfare was designed to provide help to single mothers, primarily widowed at the time of the enactment of the Aid to Dependent Children legislation, but then also increasingly to help out abandoned women.

In the 1950's, there was so much concern that these women were secretly married or secretly having relationships with the fathers of their children that the so-called "man in the house" rules were enacted in the 1950's in order to ensure that there were no fathers around prior to giving welfare benefits. They even went so far as to peek in windows of the homes of welfare recipients late at night to make sure no man was around.

The welfare system was designed to exclude fathers; there is no question about that. Now, there have been some attempts over the years, starting in the 1960's with the AFDC/UP or unemployed parent program to try to minimize the effects of welfare on family disruption, but those efforts have been in my view far too little and far too late.

There is research by a fellow out at the University of Washington that takes a look at welfare benefit levels on various social indicators, and one of the things he finds is that while differences in welfare benefits do not substantially impact conceptions, they substan-

tially affect what happens after conception, and that where welfare benefits are highest, marriage rates following conception are lowest.

So if welfare does not encourage the actual conception, it becomes an enabling system for single-parenting, and that is the perverse incentive. You know, people being what they are, there have been conceptions out-of-wedlock since the beginning of time. The problem of welfare is that we say you no longer have to enter into the option which, from the beginning of time, is the one that most individuals and couples chose, which is marriage, to give legitimacy to the child and also to give the child two parents and the economic support that comes with it.

That is the perversity within the welfare system. It has become an enabling system for single parenting, and on top of that, I think there are also punishments for marriage as well, but I think the biggest effect is enabling single parenting.

Mr. BALLARD. I would like to address that from a different standpoint, dealing with my community in particular. When there is a problem, I try to go to a time when it did not exist as it does today. But let me go beyond that. During slavery, for over 300 years, we had a 100 percent illegitimacy rate in our community. In fact, the slavemasters encouraged the men to impregnate, and if promised them, "If you get them pregnant, I will feed them, I will clothe them, and I will house them."

In 1890, after slavery, we had one of the highest rates of marriage in this country. There was something about those men—after slavery, they said, "I want my family," and in droves they went across this country to find children and mothers and marry them, even after 300 years of slavery.

In 1950, as I said, only 9 percent of our homes were headed by one person; there were grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles and aunts around to support those systems. So that even those systems were not terrible because they had those support systems.

Sometime in the 1960's, the door was opened, and females could get money from the Government if the father was not in the home. So Government entered in like the slavemaster and said, Get her pregnant, walk off and leave her, and we will provide paycheck, we will provide food stamps, and we will provide housing. And men left in droves.

And now we are wondering what happened. Well, we actually created what I call "Federal managed fatherhood abandonment." We did that to ourselves, and I think we can reverse that by bringing the fathers back into the homes. We created the welfare system. Right today in my community, one out of three young males ages 19 to 29 is under the direct supervision of the justice system, either in prison, on probation or on parole. We are now spending $50 billion a year to maintain prisons. So that when Government gets involved in our lives, in welfare, the justice system and the education system, it makes things bad for us.

We can reverse these trends by going to the community—I know we have the answer to this—we go into the community, and we find these fathers and connect them with their children, and magic begins to happen.

Senator FAIRCLOTH. That was the only question I had, and that was very enlightening, Mr. Ballard.

Dr. Popenoe, you mentioned the high-profile, Hollywood, out-of-wedlock births, and I agree that that certainly sends a bad message, but as a percentage, that would be an infinitesimally small percentage of the out-of-wedlock births, wouldn't it? The figure I remember is that something like 97 percent of out-of-wedlock births are on some sort of Government subsidy. I mean, you were talking about the girls from Rutgers——

Mr. POPENOE. Oh, no; it is not nearly anything like that. The out-of-wedlock birth rate, of course, is much higher with people on welfare, but when you have one-third of all births out-of-wedlock, there are an awful lot of people out there.

The importance of Hollywood is that those people, the Hollywood glitterati, as I called them, used to be these sort of exotic people in this little place, and you would expect that they would be these weird people. Today, they are the cultural heroes of America; they are on every talk show, they are filling the newspapers, they are speaking out, and they are role models for more and more Americans. Because of what has happened to American popular culture, that is what makes their lifestyle, if you want to call it that, so problematic.

But just as you said, they are the tip of the iceberg, and there are many, many other people around doing exactly the same thing.

Mr. HORN. In addition to their lifestyle, it seems to me that one of the things that is very disturbing about Hollywood today is that they are also writing scripts for television and film that glorify family breakup and the very behaviors which lead to irresponsibility for men and also for women.

I think it was different—who cared with Donna Reed really did in her personal life, when every week, the Donna Reed Show was piped into our homes, and the model was that of a two-parent household committed to each other? But today, it seems to me that in Hollywood, not only are we going to live that lifestyle, but we are also going to pipe into homes every night, again and again, models of irresponsibility and family breakup.

If you think about it, how many intact families are there portrayed on television today, and even when you look at the ones that are, how many within those intact families are responsible, committed, reasonably competent fathers? Very, very few. You have to go back to Bill Cosby before you see a good father role model.

So it is not just their lifestyle, but the fact that they are piping in that lifestyle to us via the movies and television and popular music that is so destructive to our culture and so destructive for our young.

Mr. POPENOE. Another interesting thing is that if you take the percentage of all sex incidents in movies and television and figure out how many of them take place within marriage, or even a committed relationship, it is a negligible number.

Mr. BALLARD. I have a question. Senator Faircloth mentioned the welfare system being reformed, and that it is not being reformed. What would it take to transform it by ensuring that every father was involved with his child 100 percent, that he made decisions around the welfare check, around the food stamps? Today, many

girls use the money for drugs, and the children never get the money at all. So that is one piece I want to put on the table. What would it take for you to put into law that every child must have the father involved, and no one, judges, lawyers, can change that? That is one piece.

Now, we are spending $50 billion a year to maintain prisons. What would it take to take one percent of that amount and put it into programs that are reaching fathers and providing healthy, loving, compassionate fathering role models?

Senator FAIRCLOTH. Maybe I will let you take that one, Dan. [Laughter.] Well, I will start. I do not know what it would take. I was sitting here, thinking, as you were asking. Any time we have touched into changing the system of welfare at all—certainly, when we were trying to reform it and talking about new welfare bills and new approaches to it—there is a vast organization, or people of a like mind-set out there, in many different organizations, who simply say you cannot touch it, that if you change it in any way, you are depriving the child of food and many other things.

I think we are going to have to almost make it as you somewhat alluded to, that if the father is not in the home, you do not get the money, not what we are saying now, that if he is involved, no money; he cannot be there. Somebody talked about peeking into windows and whatever; I almost feel that we are going to have to go the other way with it, that if he is not there, you do not get the money, and if he is there, he is pretty likely to work—much more likely than he is if he has sauntered off somewhere else.

I do not know whether that would be a reasonable approach to it or not, but it would certainly be something worth looking at.

Senator COATS. This is part of the congressional and in a sense, national, debate that we have been having over the last several years and particularly accelerated in the last year and a half, and it appears that it is going to become a major issue for debate in the upcoming Presidential election as the Nation reexamines the welfare system that we have put in place and begins to look at alternatives to that system because the consequences from that system which, as Senator Faircloth said, has spent trillions of dollars over the last 30 years, are something that we cannot continue to live with.

Fortunately, there seems to be a growing belief and understanding that the current system is not healthy, needs to be reformed substantially, with personal responsibility and accountability. The value of work in providing support, and the responsibility of taking accountability and responsibility for the children you father is built into that discussion, and I think we need that discussion and we need that debate.

A number of proposals have been put forward, and none of them have yet been resolved because there is this tug-of-war between the existing status quo and alternatives to that status quo, but I think it is becoming increasingly harder to defend the status quo, and fortunately, I think the debate is moving in the right direction, although we all feel that we are not there yet.

Mr. BALLARD. I think the debate is in the wrong place. When you talk about taking money from children and women, people get upset about that. We all know that children can really push our

"hot button." But I have not seen one proposal yet—and I have read quite a few of them, and I even testified at some of the hearings a couple of years ago—that addresses the father as a loving, nurturing, compassionate, hardworking resource.

I have heard them talk about child support, and I gave my own example. When I realized that my son had a future only if I provided it, it changed my life even more, and I did whatever it took because my heart was tied to my child's heart.

So I guess what I am asking is what can be done from a legislative standpoint to say to everyone—city, State, county—that in order for us to give that State resources, we demand that fathers be involved, first as nurturers, as responsible men, and then as men who will find jobs and the like.

Senator COATS. We clearly can legislate through the Federal benefit system penalties and disincentives for behavior that we do not think is appropriate, and we can legislate incentives and rewards for behavior that is, whether that is through the tax code, or through receipt of benefits, food stamps, welfare benefits, whatever, housing preferences—some of the things that were outlined by Dr. Horn and Dr. Popenoe. But we cannot legislate a change of heart. And as you have stated, and as Randy Phillips has stated, and I think all will agree, ultimately, it is the change of heart that makes the difference in terms of a father's commitment to marriage, to family, and to his children. And that is where the role of organizations outside of Government comes into play, and that is why it is important that organizations like yours, like Promise Keepers and others that we could name—we need to find ways to encourage, expand and nurture. I have expanded one, and that is to allow individuals to designate some of their tax money not to health and human services, or to the Federal Government, but to organizations like Promise Keepers, like your Fatherhood Initiative, and others that are out there, working, that can bring values to bear and can reach out and change hearts.

There was a black minister from the Macedonian Missionary Church in Waycross, GA who testified before our Children, Youth and Family Subcommittee way back, 10 years ago, down in Macon, who said, "What you in Congress don't seem to understand"—he was talking to the panel—"is that Government can feed people and clothe people and house people, but people are made up of more than stomachs and material needs." Every human being is not only body and mind, but is soul and spirit. Government can address body and mind. It cannot address soul and spirit. And that is where the role of the church, that is where the role of charity, that is where the role of value-shaping institutions outside of Government come in, and we need to find a way to partner with those organizations and let them do what Government never can do, which is why I am encouraged by your initiatives, by Promise Keepers, and by these other initiatives that are taking place outside of Government.

Mr. POPENOE. This is more of a question than a statement, but I trust that you all are well aware of the complexity, when you deal with welfare reform, of some of the root issues that do exist, historically. If you are talking about people of color, you are talking about racism, overt/covert racism, that has created an inequality on

every front. And to simply remove them either because of what has taken place through systematic barriers that exist with people of color in this country, facing on every front the oppression that we as the majority do not understand the pain and the hurt and what it is like.

So hopefully, the issues are not simply ones of what is right in our own eyes, but will realize what is really going on within the communities. There was a time in the Old Testament when the Nation of Israel was divided, with 12 tribes, and they needed unity because they were not accomplishing God's given task for them because of the disunity. And through King David, they rallied, and it said that the leadership at that time, a group of them, were men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do about it.

My prayer for those of you in Government is that you will have divine perspective and will also know how to help us and encourage this country in a way that allows God's perspective in some of the root issues that we are facing in a way that complements. God understands these issues. He understands the pain. He is hearing the cry of people that there be change. And hopefully, the solutions are not removing support and still not accomplishing the root issue, but only bringing greater pain. I think the answers are beyond any of us, but I think God wants to give them.

Senator COATS. I want to thank Senator Faircloth for his interest and his contributions to this effort.

Senator FAIRCLOTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all.

Senator COATS. You indicated that a lot of the work of Promise Keepers reaches men who are already involved or engaged within the church. A lot of people say what we must do is get people back into the church, but yet what you are saying—or, I think what I hear you saying—is that a lot of people who are already back in the church are still reaching out to try to find ways to be more effective husbands, fathers, men in their communities. Am I misreading that?

Mr. PHILLIPS. No, you are not. Maybe Dr. Horn or others could tell us the statistics. But tragically, the trail of broken promises that exists in this country is not isolated from those within the church community, and it is because we have been affected by the selfish pursuit of our own agendas at the detriment of those around us.

So we need, if you will, revival; we need to be brought to awareness. My own experience as a pastor for 15 years—and my wife Holly is behind me here—she suffered at the expense of my pursuit of doing ministry, serving in the gospel to others at the expense of our own relationship and my children. Until, by the sovereign hand of God, I began to see the very love that God called me to demonstrate first to my family, I was giving that up to others. And what good would that really have done to the people I was serving to have on my home front a fragmented marriage.

So we get confused, the ministers of the gospel and the people and the church, and so there is a new sense of awakening to recognize that community and commitment really comes at the grassroots level, which should start in the home, and that is a message that we all need to hear.

Mr. BALLARD. I would like to say to the audience that I am not here to bash my people and to make it appear that we are the only ones who have the problem, because we are not. I was listening to WCRF about 2 years ago, which is a religious station, and they announced that they were going to have an open line dealing with incest. And I thought they probably would not get any calls at all because in the church, we were great. But that night, they could not answer all the calls. Women were calling because their fathers, their grandfathers, their uncles were having sex with them as children, and these women were just breaking out, crying, talking about the problem. So the problem is pervasive across all races and creeds.

In comparison, what I want to show is the difference between when you get a scratch and need a bandaid, and when you get a gaping wound and need stitches. That is really the difference.

I want to help you out, because if I don't cover your scratch, it will get dirt in it and will get infected. But I have got to start where the wound is the deepest, where it is the greatest, and if I can prove to you—and I know I can—that I can not only suture that man's wounds, but that he will get up and find other men and suture their wounds, then you can see clearly that others can be helped.

Just because we are the church, just because we attend church, does not mean we are immune to the problems of the world. In fact, I would say the world is in its condition today because the church is in its condition today. And when the church rights itself—I think the Bible says, "When my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, then I will hear from heaven, and I will heal the land." So we must start with ourselves as Christians first, to make sure that we are straight and that what we are doing is going to the community to be good role models and good nurturers for men and fathers so they will turn their hearts to their children, so that as the church sees what we are doing and sees what Promise Keepers is doing, then the church will say we need a revival, and it must start with us.

Senator COATS. Charles, I will go back to a question I asked earlier. How, specifically, do you and your organization find the fatherless men and reconnect them with their children—and maybe you will want to use some examples of people you have brought with you today. I do not know how you do this.

Mr. BALLARD. Thank you, Senator. You read my mind, and I really appreciate that. And what I would like to do is call on Mr. Sharp first to come up and tell you why he and his wife moved from Cleveland. They can share with you what the program did for their lives. And while they have moved here, to Ward 7, which is one of the highest-risk communities, with two small children, to bring this program, we are starting in five new communities, reaching 16,000 households by going door-to-door, going to basketball courts and to pool halls, wherever we can go to find these fathers and turn their hearts to their children.

But let me ask Mr. and Mrs. Sharp to share their experiences, and also if the other young fathers want to share—we have two married couples who have come, also, so we believe in marriage, as you can see.

Senator COATS. OK. Good. Welcome.

Mrs. SHARP. Good morning, everyone. My name is Marlene Sharp, and I am the wife of Mr. Sharp. We are the managing couple of the DC. site. We relocated up here to Washington in December.

My husband was with the Institute long before I was. I became part of the Institute in July of 1995. I came to the Institute because my husband and I were having our differences in our lives, real bad, going through some things. He became part of the Institute. He was working with a worker. I was not pleased with his behavior with me, and I decided I was going to take the kids and leave because I did not want that behavior that he used to do to me; I did not want him around the kids, and I did not want him around me.

But while he was working with his worker, I noticed a change in him. He became more sensitive, he became more caring, he became the father, he became the role model, he became the person I wanted around my children. And I thought, if he can change like that, and we can become a family, I want this. I want my family to be together. I want my husband to play with his children. I want him to stay there. I want him to be there. I want him to be the role model for my children.

That is what made me become interested in becoming part of the Institute. And I am glad the Institute was around, because if it had not been around, we would not be here, we would not be together. I would be somewhere else; he would be wherever. I am so grateful to God that God saw this vision and this mission for us to create that path for other fathers to become a part of their children's lives. And if I can do anything to encourage females, to encourage anyone, that it is important that the fathers be involved, that is why I am here.

So that is why I became part of the Institute, out of recognizing what my husband had become, because I know that he did not know what he was doing; he did not know. But now, I can respect him for what he did not know and for what he knows now. I am so grateful to him. I love him very dearly. I love that I am a part of this Institute because it has changed our lives tremendously.

That is why I am here today. Thank you.

Senator COATS. Thank you.

Mr. SHARP. They say that behind every great man, there is a woman, and I am thankful that it is my wife. I will be 39 this June, and to this date, I have only five memories of my father while I was growing up, and none of them are positive.

I can remember that while I was growing up, I kept saying I am not going to be like him. I am in my second marriage, and I have two children by my first marriage who, because of my behavior, I do not know if they are alive or dead. It is tough, because as much as I want to be in their lives, I do not even know where they are, because of the type of man, the type of father I was being to my wife.

We lived in a very affluent neighborhood in Boca Raton, FL, and I made a lot of money, but when she was 2 months pregnant with our second child, she called the police to have me taken out of the house for being abusive to her.

I can remember the time that my wife spoke about, where I had gotten to the point where I was tired of this. I remember that at the time, we lived in Cleveland, OH, and it was a Saturday in October, and I had gotten a gun that I owned, and I drove around the city, looking for a place to get up the courage to end my life. I knew of the Institute, but I was one of those individuals—I had a very good income, I had a very good lifestyle, so that stuff was for people who had problems.

So I am not sure why, but I called one of the workers on a Saturday at his home. I was at one of those drive-up telephones, and while I was talking, I had planned to pull the driver. So I put the gun to my head, and I called the worker, not to have him talk me out of committing suicide, because I had resolved to do that, but I began to say to him that I cannot take it anymore, and that what my wife is doing to me is not fair.

And the worker said, How your wife treats you is not your problem; it is not even your business.

I said, Get out of here. You do not understand. She does this, she does this, she does this.

What the worker said was that how your wife treats you is not your problem, and if you leave her and go to another woman, you are going to take that mess with you. And I remember him asking me this question: What would happen if you could somehow learn to give up all of your selfish desires and dedicate 100 percent of yourself to pleasing your wife? And what would happen if your wife could learn to give up all of her selfish desires and dedicate 100 percent of herself to pleasing you?

I said, Well, we would probably enjoy ecstasy beyond belief.

He said, Well, you do not have any control over her, but you do have control over Larry Sharp.

And I said to him, But this pain that I have over my two children whose lives I want to be involved in—that is not right. And I began to bad-mouth their mother.

He said, The best thing you can do for your two children, even though you cannot be involved in their lives, is to learn how to be loving and kind to their mother.

And if I could equate that to anything, it would be what people experience when they dedicate themselves to Jesus Christ—that type of experience. I remember it was like a great weight was lifted off of me, and I remember relaxing my hand and pulling it away from my head, and as I did that, the gun discharged, and the bullet lodged in the dashboard of the car.

The worker asked, What was that noise?

I said, I am calling from a pay phone.

For a year and a half, no one knew how close I came to not being here today. What I decided to do was to go back and do whatever I needed to do to be the type of man, the type of husband that my wife spoke about. And this October will be 6 years since the last time I put my hands upon my wife. And it is not a thing that I struggle over. I just do not do those things anymore.

What I have done to make the circle complete is that I have begun to reach out to my own father, who was not there for me in my growing up, for me to become the type of son that he needed so that I could become the better father that I needed to be.

I will close with this. For about 2 years, I would call him, and as we were ending the conversation, I would say, "Daddy, I love you," and it would almost be as if he was racing to hang up the telephone.

This past Christmas, he called my house in Washington, DC, and he left this message on the phone: "I am just calling to see if you are all right and, as you always say to me, I want to say, son, I love you."

So we have taken it upon ourselves to give up all of our comforts of living in middle class suburbia, and we have moved into an area here in Washington, DC in Ward 7, to a complex called Paradise at Parkside, which people tell us that a few years ago, you were in danger of your life leaving your house to get to your car. And we are going to do whatever it takes to continue what was given to us to other people and to allow them to draw from the strength that they have to become leaders and role models for their own families.

Senator COATS. I want to thank you both for opening your hearts and sharing your story with us. I think it says an awful lot about this hearing that many of us could not say, and we thank you both for doing that.

Mr. BALLARD. Kevin?

Mr. TRAVICH. My name is Kevin B. Travich. I am here to speak on the issue of fatherlessness.

First of all, I want you to know that I grew up fatherless. This is a very painful issue to converse on because when my father decided to want to be a part of my life, I was 25 years old. I was so hurt because I had just come home from prison that day. If he had been a part of my life from the beginning, things would most certainly have been different. But it was 25 years, and now he wanted to be a responsible dad. No way, I told him.

Then, he asked me if he could be a grandfather to my son, little Kevin. I told him, "No. We don't need you, and I don't ever want to see you again."

I have been with the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization for a year in June. At the time, my fiancee was working at Health Family, Healthy Start, and she introduced me to the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization because I was trying to get custody of my son, little Kevin.

My son was born, and I said I was going to be there for him and not repeat the cycle of fatherlessness, and I have been. His mother gave him to the county when he was 3 months old. That day, I quit school and became a full-fledged dad. I had to change him, cook for him, clean him and teach him.

My mom told me from the beginning, "If you bring that baby into this house, he is your responsibility." Those words were very big, but it was true.

I was awarded temporary custody of my son, little Kevin.

The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization helped me file for paternity. They also helped me to become a better man. They educated me on role modeling, that is to say, how can I get on my son about making his bed if my bed is not made. So the things that I do affect my child.

The key to being a good father is setting examples for your children. This is where the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization has helped me to understand and be a responsible father and a positive role model. At the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood, I attend what is known as family sessions. There, we discuss the issues of how we can become better fathers and better role models and address different issues and problems in our households, no matter what they are.

One day, at a Wednesday family session, we did a scene of the day my father came to ask me if he could be a part of my life. I found myself facing my mistake. My mistake was turning him away.

I have not seen my father since that day, but I really wish I could find him, because the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization has helped me to turn my heart to my father, and this is what the Institute's goal is for its proteges.

Senator Coats and subcommittee, the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization has changed my life and my way of thinking. As of yesterday, in juvenile court, I filed for legal custody of my son little Kevin. In 30 days, my son will be living with me and my fiancee and her son, Derwin, who also grew up fatherless until I came into his life.

My stepson Derwin wants to know his natural father. I shall not and will not deny him that right. I am going to support him 100 percent. Why? Because I have been there, and as a protege of the Institute, this is where I am at in the Institute.

I must admit that I am a happier man today than I was yesterday, and I can honestly say this is true. But before I close, I would like to share an incident that occurred since I have been in the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization.

My girlfriend at the time—now she is my fiancee—and I had gotten into a dispute, and the police had gotten involved. They wanted someone to come and pick me up. I called my outreach specialist, Mr. Collins, and he came to pick me up. Mind you, it is about 11 o'clock at night. This man has a wife and a family, but he came to his protege's aid, and we talked about what happened. Afterward, I went home and apologized to my fiancee, and everything was okay.

My point is that if I had not had my outreach specialist, I would have gone to jail. Locking a black man up is not the answer. Being a positive role model to your wife, fiancee, girlfriend, and children is the answer, as well as being a responsible parent and father. This is what I have learned in being a protege of the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood.

I would like to close by saying thank you for listening to my testimony.

Senator COATS. Well, thank you, Kevin.

I regret to announce that we need to close the hearing by 11:30, and it is 11:25 now.

I want to reiterate the point that while we are a legislative body here, and there are things that we can do legislatively, the testimony of the Sharps and of Kevin demonstrates we cannot legislate that, and that is why I am so appreciative of institutions like yours, Charles, and yours, Randy, and the work that Dr. Popenoe

and Dr. Horn are doing. It is what I call beyond Government; it is outside of Government, but it can address problems in ways that Government cannot. So we have to understand the relationship that exists between legislating and efforts outside of legislating that are necessary in order to address this most fundamental problem that exists in our society today and address it in successful ways.

We have had 30 years of Federal effort. We have tried legislation. We have tried Federal programs. The problem has not gotten better; it has gotten worse. And so unless we can look to alternatives outside of Government, we are not going to solve this problem.

But we have heard some dramatic testimony here today from people whose lives have changed, and not only have their lives changed, but they are making a difference in a lot of other lives.

So I would just commend you and thank you for your testimony and thank all of the panelists for their work.

It is my understanding, Dr. Horn, that your organization has put together some public service announcements, and maybe we could close with your description of those, followed by a viewing of those, and let that be the closing.

If anybody wants to submit additional testimony or material, obviously, we will keep the record open to do that. We may have some additional questions for you, and we hope we can maintain a working relationship with you as we explore this very important area.

Mr. HORN. Thank you, Senator.

While it is clear that there is no single cause for the problem of increasing father absence, it is also clear that there will be no single, one solution. This has got to be a war we battle on many different fronts including, and perhaps even most importantly, at the ground level, with programs like Charles Ballard's.

Part of what we try to do is to change the cultural debate and the climate and our understanding of the role of fathers in the lives of their kids, and I have brought three very short public service announcements that we have produced.

The first is narrated by Frank Gifford. All of them emphasize the importance of fathers' involvement in their children's lives and not just the economic contributions that fathers make.

[Videotape shown.]

Mr. HORN. The second PSA, we developed with the State of Virginia, and it takes a little different tack, but essentially, the message is the same.

[Videotape shown.]

Mr. HORN. And the final one, we are about to release with the Ad Council, and it is narrated by James Earl Jones.

[Videotape shown.]

Senator COATS. Those are highly effective. I hope that every station in America will run those in prime time.

Again, I want to—yes, sir.

Mr. BALLARD. Senator, we had one mother who had prepared testimony, if she could have 6 seconds.

Senator COATS. You sure can. I apologize.

Mrs. STEWART. Hello, subcommittee. My name is Susan Stewart. I am 24 years old. I would like to give you a little testimony on behalf of what the National Institute has done for me.

I was referred to the Institute by the Department of Human Services. When I first came to the Institute, I was an unwed mother of two children and homeless. Because of negative, abusive past experiences between myself and my spouse, we surrendered custody of our children.

We faithfully attended the Institute as they, to the glory of God, supported us emotionally and diligently with parental issues. They walked us through painful issues and dragged-out court dates.

We have come a long way since then. We have been drug-free for 2½ years and are now in a stable marriage. We are in a nonabusive, loving relationship with understanding and communication. I have seen my husband grow spiritually and emotionally for the love and support of our children. I have witnessed this at many home visits.

We now have stable housing, each has a stable job, and I went back to school—and the kids will be home in July.

As I look back at some past issues, I feel that part of the reason why our relationship was failing was because we let society dictate our relationship and discourage us as being an interracial couple.

The Institute has helped us feel confident and stable toward one another by leaving outsiders out and looking within.

Thank you, Institute, and may God bless you. [Applause.]

Senator COATS. Well, thank you, and the applause is entirely appropriate.

If you want to add something, Mr. Stewart, please go ahead.

Mr. STEWART. I just want to say that I am in support of what my wife said. I think it is going to take a collaborative effort by all the institutions in society, and I think we all need to make a commitment and see a reflection of ourselves in what has been said here today.

I think the Institute is a powerful organization that is recreating the dynamics of what we call true fatherhood. Within every man, there is a paternal instinct, and if we can use something as a platform to reconnect with that, with everybody involved collectively, then I think that we can really change some things.

I just want to say that if there were ever a Lazarus, then I am that prototype, and the Institute has really resurrected true intimacy, not just the masculinity of what we would call fatherhood, but letting me know the sensitive issues of being a father. I would just hope that whatever you can do in your power, Mr. Senator and all the other people involved, would be extremely appreciated. [Applause.]

Senator COATS. Thank you. Well-said.

Well, this has been an extraordinary hearing, and I hope it has been as meaningful to all of you here and to all those watching on CSPAN as it has been to me. I want to thank all of our witnesses who have testified and, Charles, the people that you have brought along to give us personal witness to the work that your institute is doing and, more importantly, the inspiring stories of those who have discovered the joy and the rewards and the meaningfulness of reconnecting with their families.

Thanks to all of you, particularly for the work that you do.
[Additional material submitted for the record follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID B. LEVY, ESQUIRE, PRESIDENT, THE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS COUNCIL

I commend you, Chairman Coats, and members of the subcommittee, for holding this hearing on Responsible Fatherhood, for which we offer this written testimony.

Our Children's Rights Council is a national child-advocacy organization with 38 chapters in the United States and Japan. We publish a quarterly newsletter entitled "Speak Out for Children," publish a Parenting Directory listing 1,200 organizations that can help children and families, hold an annual national conference, and publish a Catalog of Resources, listing more than 100 books and reports on children's needs.

America often hears criticism of fathers, but what we have not heard much about are pushed away and forced away fathers (and increasingly, pushed away and forced away mothers).

Our Children's Rights Council favors family formation and family preservation, but we work especially to educate and advocate for a child's right to have both a father and a mother, wherever possible, regardless of the parents' marital situation.

Parents are pushed away from their children by many policies and attitudes, some of which are:

1) welfare, which rewards father absence by making welfare payments only to single parents;

2) housing policies, which discriminate against poor two-parent families;

3) financial child support policies, which treat non-custodial parents as absentee cash registers, whose only function is to send a check.

There is overwhelming research that children need their fathers. There is also abundant research that shows a correlation between father absence and higher rates of crime and drugs, lower school performance, and lower self-esteem by young people.

There is also a research correlation between higher teenage pregnancy rates and emotional and physical father absence.

Despite this research showing the importance of fathers as important to healthy child development, our public policies have treated fathers mainly as cash cows, whose only contribution to their children is financial. And we have ignored the overwhelming evidence that the best way to encourage both financial and emotional support is by involving fathers in the lives of their children.

The Census Bureau reports that fathers with joint custody (8 percent of fathers) pay 90.1 percent of their financial support; fathers with visitation (55 percent of fathers) pay 79.1 percent of their financial support; and fathers with neither joint custody nor visitation (37 percent of fathers) pay only 44.5 percent of their financial support.

It would appear that if there were more joint custody and visitation, there would be far higher voluntary support compliance, and much less taxpayer cost needed to "enforce" child support.

We recommend that, in regard to H.R. 4 (the welfare reform/child support bill), additional hearings be held to examine ways to make the American child support system more "family friendly."

One way would be for Congress to encourage more joint custody and access/visitation. If Congress can legislate in the areas of child abuse, child neglect, adoption, education, parental kidnapping, and virtually every other area of children's lives, the government can be involved in custody and visitation.

The government would not have to determine specific custody and visitation orders, but could direct the states to measure performance by the amount of joint custody (shared parenting) and visitation that exists within a state.

Many other things can also be done to encourage positive parenting in this country. I would be glad to make available to the subcommittee copies of the 1993 book I edited entitled "The Best Parent is Both Parents."

Thank you for your efforts to improve the lives of children.

This hearing is now adjourned.
[Whereupon, at 11:34 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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